EVERYMAN.
I WILL GO WITH
THEE.
& BE THY GVIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE

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ESSAYS AND
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THE INVISIBLE PLAYMATE
W. V. HER BOOK, AND
IN MEMORY OF W. V.

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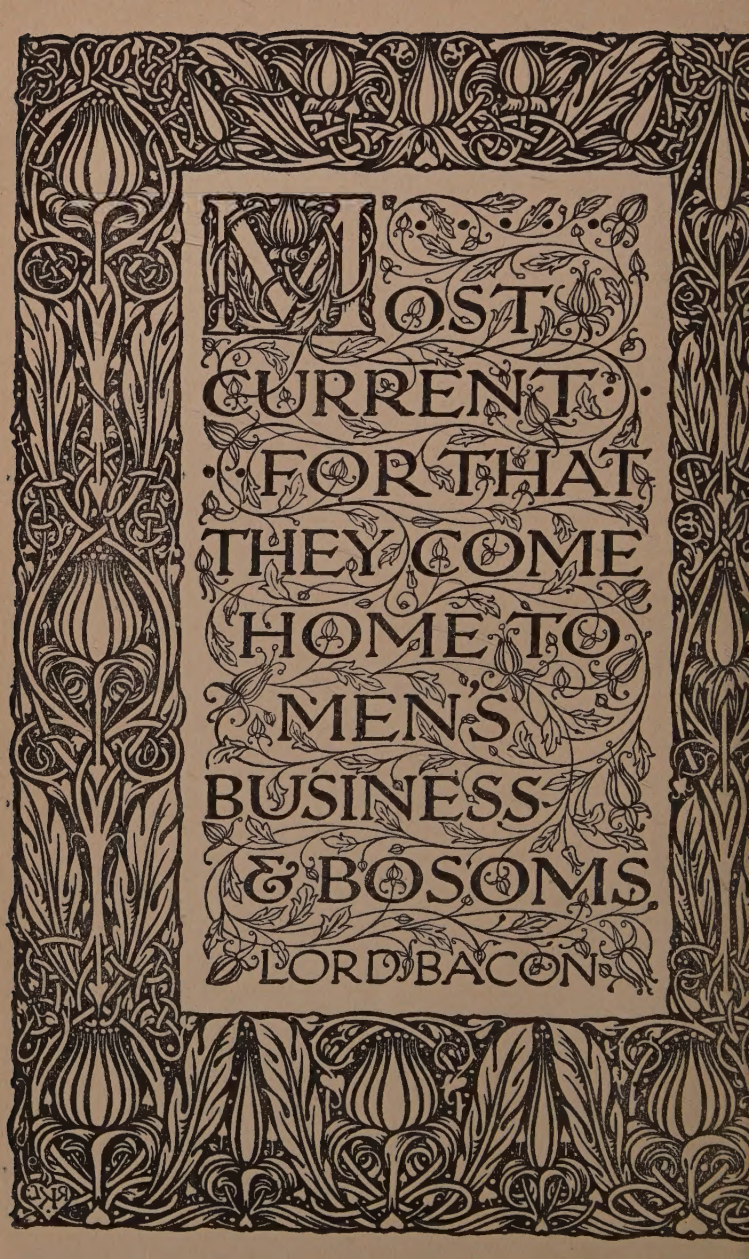
MOST
CURRENT
FOR THAT
THEY COME
HOME TO
MEN'S
BUSINESS
& BOSOMS
LORD BACON

The INVISIBLE PLAYMATE W. V. HER BOOK & IN MEMORY OF W. V. BY WILLIAM CANTON

LONDON & TORONTO
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INTRODUCTION

The sun, the sea, the forest wild—
All nature loves a little child."

THIS couplet is from the "Legend of Childhood" in a volume of poems entitled *Comrades*, which Mr. William Canton published after the wonderful and almost too pitiful trilogy of "W. V." here put into one volume. That is a legend to whose transcription he has given himself as no other writer has done in all the recent era of child-literature or child-interpretation; and it is only on perusing again these records, where the chronicler's touch is lighter than down, yet poignant as any in the sad history of the death of kings, that one understands at all where this art that is before art gets its translunary tints and its deceptively wayward style. It may be understood, it cannot be analysed; the critic is lost in the attempt to explain it, and he falls back as he must on rhyme and the rhymed philosophy that the creator and sad remembrancer of "W. V." has supplied in the "Legend of Childhood:" to wit—

"Unnoticed by historian and sage,
These bright-eyed chits have been from age to age
The one supreme majority. I find
Mankind hath been their slaves and womankind
Their worshippers; and both have lived in dread
Of time and tyrants, toiled and wept and bled
Because of some quaint elves they called their own.
Had little ones in Egypt been unknown
No Pharaoh would have had the power, methinks,
To pile the Pyramids or carve the Sphinx.'

With Marjorie Fleming, "W. V." lives in a child's region of her own; it may not be a mile from Cloan Den, and on the skirts of the Caledonian Forest. But it is very near mother-earth, and very close to the stars. The

effect of reading its memorials in prose and verse is to make one wish their writer would be tempted to turn child chronicler at large, and deal with all the children of history and legend who, like her, never grew up, but remained children for ever. E. R.

Mr. Canton's published works comprise:—

A Lost Epic, and other Poems, 1887; The Invisible Playmate: a Story of the Unseen, 1894, 1897; W. V., Her Book and Various Verses, 1896; A Child's Book of Saints, 1898, 1902; Children's Sayings, Edited, with a Digression on the Small People, 1900; The True Annals of Fairyland (The Reign of King Herla), 1900, etc.; In Memory of W. V. (Winifred Vida Canton), 1901; Comrades: Poems, Old and New, 1902; What is the Bible Society? 1903; The Story of the Bible Society, 1904; A History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1904-1910; Little Hands and God's Book: a Sketch of the Bible Society (1804-1904), 1905; The Bible and the English People, 1911.

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THE INVISIBLE PLAYMATE

The poor lost image brought back plain as dreams.

BROWNING.

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
When all the nerve of sense is numb.

TENNYSON.

God, by God's ways occult,
May—doth, I will believe—bring back
All wanderers to a single track.

BROWNING.

Vous voyez sous mon rire mes larmes,
Vieux arbres, n'est-ce pas? et vous n'avez pas cru
Que j'oublierai jamais le petit disparu.

HUGO.

THE INVISIBLE PLAYMATE

THE following pages are taken from a series of letters which I received a year or two ago; and since no one is now left to be affected by the publication of them it can be no abuse of the writer's confidence to employ them for the purpose I have in view. Only by such extracts can I convey any clear impression of the character of the person most concerned.

To many the chief interest in what follows will centre in the unconscious self-portraiture of the writer. Others may be most attracted by the frank and naïve picture of child-life. And yet a third class of readers may decide that the one passage of any real value is that which describes the incident with which the record closes. On these matters, however, any comment from me appears to be unnecessary.

I need only add that the writer of the letters was twice married, and that just before the death of his first wife their only child, a girl, died at the age of six weeks.

"I never could understand why men should be so insanely set on their first-born being a boy. This of ours, I am glad to say, is a girl. I should have been pleased either way, but as a matter of fact I wanted a girl. I don't know why, but somehow with a girl one feels that one has provided against the disillusionment, the discomfort, the homelessness of old age and of mental and physical decrepitude.

"For one thing above all others I am grateful:

that, so far as I can see, heredity has played no horrible pranks upon us. The poor little mortal is wholesome and shapely from her downy little poll to her little pink toe-nails. She could not have been lovelier if Math had made her out of flowers (or was it Gwydion? You remember the *Mabinogion*). And she grips hard enough already to remind one of her remote arboreal ancestors. One of God's own apelets in the Tree of Life!"

"Exultant! No, dear C— anything but that! Glad as I am, I am morbidly apprehensive and alert to a myriad possibilities of misery. I am all *quick*. I feel as though I had shed my epidermis, and had but 'true skin' for every breath and touch of mischance to play upon.

"*I have been through it all before.* I was exultant then. I rode a bay trotting-horse, and was proud of heart and wore gloves in my cap. I feel sick at heart when I think how I was wrapped up in *that* child; how in my idolatry of her I clean forgot the savage irony of existence; how, when I was most unsuspecting, most unprepared—unarmed, naked—I was —stabbed from behind!

"I know what you will say. I see the grave look on your face as you read this. Perhaps I ought not to write it. I have never said so much to any one before; but that is what I felt—what I feel.

"Do you think, if I can help it, I shall give any one a chance of surprising me so again? This poor little mite can bring my heart with a leap into my throat, or send it down shivering into my boots—that I can't help—but never so long as I live, and dote on her as I may, never shall I again be taken at unawares. I have petrified myself against disaster. Sometimes

as I am returning home in the grey dawn, sometimes even when I am putting the latch-key into the lock, I stop and hear an inward voice whispering 'Baby is dead'; and I reply, 'Then she is dead.' The rest I suppress, ignore, refuse to feel or think. It is not pleasant schooling; but I think it is wise."

To this I presume I must have replied with the usual obvious arguments, for he writes later:

"No; I *don't* think I lose more than I gain. Trust me, I take all I can get: only, I provide against reprisals. Yes; unfortunately all this does sound like Caliban on Setebos. Is that Caliban's fault? Dear man, I know I shock you. I almost shock myself; but how can *I* trust? Shall I bargain and say, 'You took the other: ensure me this one, and I will think You as good and wise and merciful—as a man?' And if I make no bargain, but simply profess belief that 'all was for the best,' will that destroy the memory of all that horror and anguish? Job! The author of 'Job' knew more about astronomy than he knew about fatherhood.

"The anguish and horror were perchance meant for my chastening! Am I a man to be chastened in that way? Or will you say, perhaps but for these you would have been a lost soul by this? To such questionings there is no end. As to selfishness, I will suffer anything for her sake; but how will *she* profit by my suffering *for the loss of her?*"

After an interval he wrote:

"You are very good to take so much interest in the Heiress of the Ages. We have experienced some

of the ordinary troubles—and let me gravely assure you that this is the single point in which she does resemble other children—but she is well at present and growing visibly. The Norse god who heard the growing of the grass and of the wool on the sheep's back would have been stunned with the *tintamarre* of her development.

"Thereto she *noticeth*. So saith her mother; so averreth the nurse, an experienced and unimpeachable witness. Think of it, C! As the human mind is the one reality amid phenomena, this young person is really establishing and giving permanence to certain bits of creation. To that extent the universe is the more solid on her account.

"Nor are her virtue and excellency confined to noticing; she positively radiates. Where she is, that is the sunny side of the house. I am no longer surprised at the folk-belief about the passing of a maiden making the fields fertile. I observe that in the sheltered places where she is taken for an airing the temperature is the more genial, the trees are in greener leaf, and the red half of the apple is that nearest the road. . . .

"Accept for future use this shrewd discovery from my experience. When a baby is restless and fretful, *hold its hands!* That steadies it. It is not used to the speed at which the earth revolves and the solar system whirls towards the starry aspect of Hercules (half a million miles a day!). Or it may be that coming out of the vortex of atoms it is sub-conscious of some sense of falling through the void. The gigantic paternal hands close round the warm, tiny, twitching fists, soft as grass and strong as the everlasting hills.

"I wonder if those worthy old Accadians had any

notion of this when they prayed, 'Hold thou my hands.'"

In several subsequent letters he refers to the growth and the charming ways of the "little quadruped," the "quadrumanous angel," the "bishop" (from an odd resemblance in the pose of the head to the late Bishop of Manchester). One passage must be given:

"It is an 'animal most gracious and benignant,' as Francesca calls Dante. Propped up with cushions, she will sit for half an hour on the rug at my feet while I am writing, content to have her fluffy head patted at the end of every second paragraph.

"This evening she and I had the study to ourselves. She on my knee, cosily snuggling within my arm, with a tiny hand clasped about each thumb. We were sitting by the window, and the western sky was filled with a lovely green light, which died out very slowly. It was the strangest and dreamiest of afterglows. She was curiously quiet and contented. As she sat like that, my mind went back to that old life of mine, that past which seems so many centuries away; and I remembered how that poor little white creature of those unforgettable six weeks sat where *she* was now sitting—so unlike *her*, so white and frail and old-womanish, with her wasted arms crossed before her, and her thin, worn face fading, fading, fading away into the everlasting dark. Why does—how *can* things like these happen?

"She would have been nine now if she had lived. How she would have loved this tiny sister!"

"You will be amused, perhaps you will be amazed,

at my foolishness. When the postman hands you *Rhymes about a Little Woman*[1] you will understand what I mean. In trotting up and down with the Immortal in my arms, crooning her to sleep, these rhymes *came*. I did not *make* them! And sing—don't read them. Seriously, the noticeable thing about them is their unlikeness to fictitious child-poems. I did not print them on that account, of course. But to me it will always be a pleasant thing to see, when I am very, very old, that genuine bit of the past. And I like to fancy that some day she will read—with eyes not dry—these nonsense verses that her poor old father used to sing to her in

> ' the days before
> God shut the doorways of her head.' "

" You remember what I said about the child's hands? When I went to bed very late last night, the words, ' Hold Thou my hands,' kept floating about in my mind, and then there grew on me the most perplexing half-recollection of a lovely air. I could not remember it quite, but it simply haunted me. Then, somehow, these words seemed to grow into it and out of it:

> Hold Thou my hands!
> In grief and joy, in hope and fear,
> Lord, let me *feel* that Thou art near,
> Hold Thou my hands!
>
> If e'er by doubts
> Of Thy good fatherhood depressed,
> I cannot find in Thee my rest,
> Hold Thou my hands!

[1] See p. 19.

Hold Thou my hands,—
These passionate hands too quick to smite,
These hands so eager for delight,—
Hold Thou my hands!

And when at length,
With darkened eyes and fingers cold,
I seek some last loved hand to hold,
Hold Thou my hands!

"I could endure it no longer, so I woke N [his wife]. I was as gentle, gradual, considerate as possible!—just as if she were waking naturally. And she *re-mon-strat-ed!* 'The idea of waking any one at three in the morning to bother about a tune!' Dear, dear!

"Well, it was from 'The Yeoman of the Guard.' You will know where by the rhythm and refrain!"

As the months went by the "benign anthropoid" developed into a "stodgy volatile elephant with a precarious faculty of speech," and her father affected to be engrossed in ethnological and linguistic studies based on observation of her experiments in life and language. I now extract without further interpolation, merely premising that frequent intervals elapsed between the writing of the various passages, and that they themselves are but a small selection from many similar:

"The 'golden ephelant' is unquestionably of Early-English origin. Perpend: we in our degeneracy say 'milk'; she preserves the Anglo-Saxon 'meolc.' Hengist and Horsa would recognise her as a kinswoman. Through the long ages between them and her, the pleasant guttural pronunciation of the

ancient pastures has been discarded by all but the traditional dairyman, and even he has modified the *o* into *u*. Similarly a 'wheel' is a 'hwéol.' But, indeed, she is more A-S than the Anglo-Saxons themselves. All her verbs end in 'en,' even 'I am-en.'"

"It is singularly interesting to me to watch the way in which she adapts words to her purposes. As she sits so much on our knees, she uses 'knee' for 'to sit down.' To-day she made me 'knee' in the arm-chair beside her. 'Too big' expresses, comically enough sometimes, all kinds of impossibility. She asked me to play one of her favourite tunes. 'Pappa cannot, dearie,' 'Oh!'—with much surprise—'Too big?'"

"Oh, man, man, what wonderful creatures these bairnies are! Did it ever occur to you that they must be the majority of the human race? The men and women combined may be about as numerous, but they must far outnumber the men or the women taken separately, and as all the women and most of the men—bad as they are—side with them, what a political power they might be, if they had their rights! I have been thinking of this swarming of the miniature people, all over the globe, during the last few days. Could one but make a poem of *that!* I tried —and failed. 'Too big!' But I did the next best thing—conceived an *Unknown German Child-poem*, and—what think you?—reviewed it. If after reading it, the 'Astrologer' [a hypercritical young friend] tells you it reminds him of Carlyle, just ask him whether he never, *never* heard of Richter."

[1] See p. 27.

" She delights in music and drawing. It is curious how sharp she is to recognise things. She picked out a baby in a picture the other day, and discovered a robin among the flowers and leaves high up on a painted panel of the mirror. What a contrast to the grown men of half-savage tribes one reads of, who cannot distinguish a house from a tree in a drawing! She has, too, quite an extraordinary ear for rhyme and rhythm. I find, to my amazement, that she can fill in the rhymes of a nonsense poem of twenty lines —' What shall we do to be rid of care? ' by the way [1] —and when she does not know the words of a verse, she times out the metre with the right number of blanks.

" One is puzzled, all the while, to know how much she *understands.* In one of her rhymes she sings, ' Birds are singing in the bowers.' The other day as she was chanting it a dog went by; ' That, bowers! ' (bow-wows!) she cried suddenly, pointing to the dog."

" To-day she was frightened for the first time. We heard her roaring ' No, no,' in great wrath in the garden. A sparrow had dropped on the grass somewhere near her, and she was stamping and waving her hands in a perfect panic. When she found it was not to be driven away, she came sweeping in like a little elephant, screaming for ' mamma ' to take up arms against that audacious ' dicken.' It was really ludicrous to see her terrorised by that handful of feathers.

" Yet she is not a bit afraid of big things. The dog in the kennel barked the first time she went near him. ' Oh! ' she exclaimed, with a little laugh of surprise, ' coughing! ' Now she says, ' He not bark; only say

[1] See p. 22.

good morning.' She *must* kiss the donkey's forehead; she invites the mother-hen to shake hands, and the other day she was indignant that I would not hold a locomotive till she 't'oked it dear head.' She has a comfortable notion that things in general were intended for her. If she wants a cow or a yoke of horses with the ploughman for a plaything, it is but to 'ask my pappa' and have. The wind and the rain and the moon 'walking' come out to see *her*, and the flowers 'wake up' with the same laudable object."

"Yes; a child has a civilising effect. I feel that I am less of a bear than I was. It is with some men as it is with the blackthorn; the little white *flower* comes out first, and then the whole gnarled faggot breaks into *leaf*."

"I came to-day across a beautiful little bit from the letters of Marcus Aurelius. 'On my return from Lorium I found my little lady—*domnulam meam*—in a fever;' later: 'You will be glad to hear that our little one is better and running about the room.' The old Emperor was one of ourselves. Indeed, look at his face in those marble busts in the Museum; he might have been a man of our own generation. It was he, I remember, who wrote, '*One* prays—How shall I not lose my little son? Do *thou* pray thus—How shall I not be afraid to lose him?' Ah, how shall I not be afraid!"

"We have had our first walk in the dark—a dark crowded with stars. She had never seen it before. It perplexed her, I think, for she stood and looked and said nothing. But it did not frighten her in the least.

"I want her to have some one marvellous thing impressed on her memory—some one ineffable recollection of childhood; and it is to be the darkness associated with shining stars and a safe feeling that her father took her out into it. This is to last all through her life—till the 'great dark' comes; so that when it does come, it shall be with an old familiar sense of fatherhood and starlight.

"You will laugh at me—but oh, no! you will not laugh—when I tell you what a horror haunts me lest I should die before her little brain has been stamped with a vivid memory of me—clear as life, never to be obliterated, never even to be blurred. Who was it named Augustine 'the son of the tears of St. Monica'? This child might well be called the daughter of my tears—yet they have not been bitter ones.

"When she did speak—fluently at last—it was to suppose that a good many pipes were being lit up in the celestial spaces! This was both prosy and impossible, yet what could I say? Ah, well! some day she shall learn that the stars are not vestas, and that the dark is only the planetary shadow of a great rock in a blue and weary land—though little cause have I now of all men to call it weary! Has that notion of the shadow ever occurred to you? And do you ever think of night on one of the small planetoids, five miles in diameter? That were the shadow of a mere boulder; and yet on that boulder, though there can be neither water nor air there, what if there were some unknown form of motherhood, of babyhood, curled up asleep in the darkness?

"But to return to Pinaforifera. Thinking these stars but vestas for the lighting of pipes, what must she do but try to blow them out, as she blows out her

'dad's'! I checked that at once, for i' faith this young person's powers are too miraculous to allow of any trifling with the stellar systems."

"I fear I must weary you with these 'trivial fond records.' Really she is very interesting. 'Ever what you doing?' 'Upon *my* word!' 'Dear iccle c'eature!' 'Poor my hands!'—just as people used to say, 'Good my lord!'"

"What heartless little wretches they are after all! Sometimes, when I ask her for a kiss, she puts her head aside and coolly replies, 'I don't want to!' What can you say to that? One must respect her individuality, though she is but a child. Now and again she has her tender moments: 'I shut-a door and leave poor you?' 'Yes, you did, dear.' 'I stay with you!'—which means inexpressible things. You should see the odd coaxing way in which she says, '*My* father!' Then this to her doll: 'You cry? I kiss you. You not cry no more.'"

"Upon my life I am growing imbecile under the influence of this Pinaforifera. I met a very old, wrinkled, wizened little woman to-day, and as I looked at her poor dim eyes and weathered face, it flashed upon me like an inspiration—'And she, too, was once a rosy, merry little mortal who set some poor silly dad doting!' Then at the station I came across what seemed to me quite an incident—but, there, I have been daft enough to write the matter out in full, and you can read it, if paternity and its muddle-headedness do not fill your soul with loathing."[1]

[1] See p. 37.

" By the way, she has got a new plaything. I do not know what suggested the idea; I don't think it came from any of us. Lately she has taken to nursing an invisible 'iccle gaal' (little girl) whom she wheels about in her toy perambulator, puts carefully to bed, and generally makes much of. This is —'Yourn iccle baby, pappa old man!' if you please. When I sit down, this accession to the family is manifest to her on my right knee; and she sits on my left and calls it a 'nice lovely iccle thing.' When she goes to bed she takes Struwwelpeter, Sambo (a sweet being in black india-rubber), and, of all people, Mrs. Grundy; and when she has been tucked in she makes place for 'yourn iccle baby,' which, of course, I have to give her with due care. It is very odd to see her put her hands together for it, palms upward, and to hear her assurance, 'I not let her fall, pappa.'"

" What droll little brains children have! In Struwwelpeter, as probably you are not aware, naughty Frederick hurts his leg, and has to be put to bed; and

> 'The doctor came and shook his head,
> And gave him nasty physic too.'

This evening, as baby was prancing about in her night-dress, her mother told her she would catch cold, and then she would be ill and would have to be put to bed. 'And will the doctor come and shook my head?' she asked eagerly. Of course we laughed outright; but the young person was right for all that. If the doctor was to do any good, it could not conceivably be by shaking his own head!"

" I told you about her invisible playmate. Both

N [his wife] and I have been wondering whether the child is only what is called making-believe, or whether she really sees anything. I suppose you have read Galton's account of the power of 'visualising,' as he calls it; that is, of actually seeing outside of one the appearance of things that exist only in imagination. He says somewhere that this faculty is very strongly developed in some young children, who are beset for years with the difficulty of distinguishing between the objective and the subjective. It is hard to say how one should act in a case of this sort. To encourage her in this amusement might lead to some morbid mental condition; to try to suppress it might be equally injurious, for this appears to be a natural faculty, not a disease. Let nature have her own way?

"If I rest my foot on my right knee to unlace my boot, she pulls my foot away—'Pappa, you put yourn foot on yourn iccle baby.' She won't sit on my right knee at all until I have pretended to transfer the playmate to the other.

"This girl is going to be a novelist. We have got a rival to the great Mrs. Harris. She has invented Mrs. Briss. No one knows who Mrs. Briss is. Sometimes she seems to mean herself; at other times it is clearly an interesting and inscrutable third person."

"The poor wee ape is ill. The doctor doesn't seem to understand what is the matter with her. We must wait a day or two for some development."

"How these ten days and nights have dragged past! Do not ask me about her. I cannot write. I cannot think."

" My poor darling is dead! I hardly know whether I am myself alive. Half of my individuality has left me. I do not know myself.

" Can you believe this? *I* cannot; and yet I saw it. A little while before she died I heard her speaking in an almost inaudible whisper. I knelt down and leaned over her. She looked curiously at me and said faintly: ' Pappa, I not let her fall.' ' Who, dearie? ' ' Yourn iccle baby. I gotten her in here.' She moved her wasted little hand as if to lift a fold of the bedclothes. I raised them gently for her, and she smiled like her old self. How can I tell the rest?

" Close beside her lay that other little one, with its white worn face and its poor arms crossed in that old-womanish fashion in front of her. Its large, suffering eyes looked for a moment into mine, and then my head seemed filled with mist and my ears buzzed.

" *I saw that.* It was not hallucination. It was *there.*

" Just think what it means, if that actually happened. Think what must have been going on in the past, *and I never knew.* I remember, now, she never called it ' mamma's baby '; it was always ' yourn.' Think of the future, now that they are both—what? Gone?

" If it actually happened! I *saw* it. I am sane, strong, in sound health. I saw it—*saw* it—do you understand? And yet how incredible it is! "

Some months passed before I heard again from my friend. In his subsequent letters, which grew rarer and briefer as time went on, he never again referred to his loss or to the incident which he had described.

His silence was singular, for he was naturally very communicative. But what most surprised me was the absolute change of character that seemed to have been brought about in an instant—literally in the twinkling of an eye. One glimpse of the Unseen (as he called it) and the embittered recollections of bereavement, the resentment, the distrust, the spirit of revolt were all swept into oblivion. Even the new bereavement had no sting. There was no anguish; there were no words of desolation. The man simply stood at gaze, stunned with amazement.

RHYMES ABOUT A LITTLE WOMAN

She is my pride; my plague: my rest; my rack: my bliss; my bane:
She brings me sunshine of the heart: and soft'ning of the brain.

RHYMES ABOUT A LITTLE WOMAN

I

SHE's very, very beautiful; but—alas!—
Isn't it a pity that her eyes are glass?
And her face is only wax, coloured up, you know;
And her hair is just a fluff of very fine tow!

No!—she's *not* a doll. That will never do—
Never, never, never, for it is not true!

Did they call you a doll? Did they say that to *you?*
Oh, your eyes are little heavens of an earth made new;
Your face, it is the blossom of mortal things;
Your hair might be the down from an angel's wings!

Oh, yes; she's beauti-beautiful! What else could she be?
God meant her for Himself first, then gave her to me.

II

SHE was a treasure; she was a sweet;
She was the darling of the Army and the Fleet!

When—she—smiled
The crews of the line-of-battle ships went wild!

When—she—cried—
Whole regiments reversed their arms and sighed!

When she was sick, for her sake
The Queen took off her crown and sobbed as if her heart would break.

III

Look at her shoulders now they are bare;
Are there any signs of feathers growing there?

No, not a trace; she cannot fly away;
This wingless little angel has been sent to stay.

IV

What shall we do to be rid of care?
Pack up her best clothes and pay her fare;

Pay her fare and let her go
By an early train to Jer-I-Cho.

There in Judæa she will be
Slumbering under a green palm-tree;

And the Arabs of the Desert will come round
When they see her lying on the ground,

And some will say, "Did you ever see
Such a remark-a-bil babee?"

And others, in the language the Arabs use,
"*Nous n'avons jamais vu une telle papoose!*"

And she will grow and grow; and then
She will marry a chief of the Desert men;

And he will keep her from heat and cold,
And deck her in silk and satin and gold—

With bangles for her feet and jewels for her hair,
And other articles that ladies wear!

So pack up her best clothes, and let her go
By an early train to Jer-I-Cho!

Pack up her best clothes, and pay her fare;
So *we* shall be rid of trouble and care!

V

Take the idol to her shrine;
In her cradle lay her!
Worship her—she is divine;
Offer up your prayer!
She will bless you, bed and board,
If befittingly adored.

VI

On a summer morning, Babsie up a tree
In came a Blackbird, sat on Babsie's knee.

Babsie to Blackbird—"Blackbird, how you do?"
Blackbird to Babsie—"Babsie, how was you?

"How was *you* in this commodious tree—
"How was *you* and all your famu—ilu—ee?"

VII

THIS is the way the ladies ride—
Saddle-a-side, saddle-a-side!

This is the way the gentlemen ride—
Sitting astride, sitting astride!

This is the way the grandmothers ride—
Bundled and tied, bundled and tied!

This is the way the babbykins ride—
Snuggled inside, snuggled inside!

This is the way, when they are late,
They *all* fly over a five-barred gate!

VIII

WE are not wealthy, but, you see,
Others are far worse off than we.

Here's a gaberlunzie begging at the door—
If we gave him Babs, he'd need no more!

Oh, she'll fill your cup, and she'll fill your can;
She'll make you happy, happy! Take her, beggar man!

Give a beggar Babsie? Give this child away?
That would leave *us* poor, and poor, for ever and a day!

After-thought—

The gaberlunzie man is sad;
The Babe is far from glee;
He with his poverty is plagued—
And with her poor teeth [1] she!

IX

Oh, where have you been, and how do you do,
And what did you beg, or borrow, or buy
For this little girl with the sash of blue?

Why,
A cushie-coo; and a cockatoo;
And a cariboo; and a kangaroo;
And a croodlin' doo; and a quag from the Zoo—
And *all* for the girl with the sash of blue!

X

When she's very thirsty, what does she do?
She croons to us in Doric; she murmurs "A-coo!"
Oh, the little Scotch girl, who would ever think
She'd want a coo—a whole coo—needing but a drink!

Moo, moo!—a coo!

Mammie's gone to market; Mammie'll soon be here;
Mammie's bought a brindled coo! Patience, woman dear!
Don't you hear your Crummie lowing in the lane?
She's going up to pasture; we'll bring her home again!

Moo, moo!—a coo!

[1] As who should say "poortith."

Grow sweet, you little wild flowers, about our Crummie's feet;
Be glad, you green and patient grass, to have our Crummie eat;
And hasten, Crummie, hasten, or what shall I do?
For here's a waesome lassie skirlin' for a coo!

Moo, moo!—a coo!

A moment yet! The sun is set, and all the lanes are red;
And here is Crummie coming to the milking shed!
Why, mother, mother, don't you hear this terrible to-do?
Dépêchez-vous! A coo—a coo—a kingdom for a coo!

Moo, moo!—a coo!

XI

When she laughs and waves about
Her pink small fingers, who can doubt
She's catching at the glittering plumes
Of angels flying round the rooms?

XII

Poor Babbles is dead with sleep;
Poor Babbles is dead with sleep!
Eyes she hardly can open keep;
Lower the gas to a glimmering peep.
All good angels, hover and keep
Watch above her—poor Babbles!—asleep.

AN UNKNOWN CHILD-POEM

Murmure indistinct, vague, obscur, confus, brouillé:
Dieu, le bon vieux grand-père, écoute émerveillé.

HUGO.

AN UNKNOWN CHILD-POEM

Of all possible books in this age of waste-paper, the wretched little volume before me, labelled *Gedichte* and bearing the name of a certain "Arm: Altegans," is assuredly one of the unluckiest. Outside the Fatherland it cannot by any chance be known to mortal; and among the author's compatriots I have been unable to discover man, woman, or child who has heard of Altegans, or is aware of the existence of these *Poems* of his. Yet I venture to express the opinion that this scarecrow of a duodecimo, with its worn-out village printer's type and its dingy paper-bag pages, contains some passages which for suggestiveness and for melody of expression are not unworthy of the exquisite "founts" and hand-made papers of wealthier and, perhaps, less noticeable singers.

Thin as the book is, it contains, as most books do, more than one cares to read; but even some of this superfluous material is in a measure redeemed by its personal bearing. One catches a glimpse of the man, and after reading his "Erster Schulgang"—the one real poem in the collection—I must confess that I felt some little curiosity and interest in regard to the author. One learns, for instance, that in 1868, when the book was printed, he was a winter-green "hoary-head"; that he had lost wife and child long ago, in "the years still touched with morning-red"; that like Hans Sachs, he had—

> "bending o'er his leather,
> Made many a song and shoe together,"—

the shoe better than the song, but, he adds whimsically, "better perchance because of the song"; that he thought no place in the earth-round could compare with his beloved village of Wieheisstes in the pleasant crag-and-fir region of Schlaraffenland ("Glad am I to have been born in thee, thou heart's-dearest village among the pines"; and here, by the way, have we not a reminiscence of Jean Paul, or is the phrase merely a coincidence?); that as a matter of fact, however, he had never during his seventy odd years travelled as many miles as ten from his Wieheisstes; that though confined in a mere nut-shell of a green valley he was a cosmopolite of infinite space; that his heart brimmed over with brotherly love for all men—for all women especially, and still more especially, poor hoary-head! for all children; but truly for all men—regarding even the levity with which they treated his name rather as a token of affectionate familiarity than as an evidence of ill-breeding, and, indeed, humorously addressing himself in more than one of the *gedichte* as "thou Old-Goose." Which last play of fancy has caused me to question — without, alas! hope of answer now — whether the abbreviated prenomen on the title-page stands for a heroic "Arminius" or for an ironical "Armer" or "Arme," as one prefers the gender; giving us the net result "Poor Old-Goose!"

Twenty years and more have elapsed since the aged worker in leather and verse gave the "Erster Schulgang"—"First Day at School," shall we say?—and these personal confidences to an apathetic Germania. Doubtless he has, long since, been gathered to his lost ones in the shadow of the grey-stone blue-slated little church. Poor singing soul, he is deaf to anything that compatriot or "speech-cousin" can say now of him or of his rhymes!

Let me, nevertheless, attempt to make an *impressioniste* transcript of this "Erster Schulgang." To reproduce the tender, simple music of its verse would be impossible; merely to render it in prose would be to traduce rather than to translate it.

The poem opens with a wonderful vision of children; delightful as it is unexpected; as romantic in presentment as it is commonplace in fact. All over the world—and all under it, too, when their time comes—the children are trooping to school. The great globe swings round out of the dark into the sun; there is always morning somewhere; and for ever in this shifting region of the morning-light the good Altegans sees the little ones afoot—shining companies and groups, couples and bright solitary figures; for they all seem to have a soft heavenly light about them!

He sees them in country lanes and rustic villages; on lonely moorlands. where narrow brown foot-tracks thread the expanse of green waste, and occasionally a hawk hovers overhead, or a mountain-ash hangs its scarlet berries above the huge fallen stones set up by the Druids in the old days; he sees them on the hillsides ("trails of little feet darkening the grass all hoary with dew," he observes), in the woods, on the stepping-stones that cross the brook in the glen, along the sea-cliffs and on the wet ribbed sands; trespassing on the railway lines, making short cuts through the corn, sitting in ferryboats; he sees them in the crowded streets of smoky cities, in small rocky islands, in places far inland where the sea is known only as a strange tradition.

The morning-side of the planet is alive with them; one hears their pattering footsteps everywhere. And as the vast continents sweep "eastering out of the high shadow which reaches beyond the moon" (here,

again, I would have suspected our poet of an unconscious reminiscence of Jean Paul, were it not that I remember Sir Thomas Browne has some similar whimsical phrase), and as new nations, with *their* cities and villages, their fields, woods, mountains and seashores, rise up into the morning-side, lo! fresh troops, and still fresh troops, and yet again fresh troops of "these small school-going people of the dawn."

How the quaint old man loves to linger over this radiant swarming of young life! He pauses for a moment to notice this or that group, or even some single mite. He marks their various nationalities—the curious little faces of them, as the revolving planet shows him (here he remembers with a smile the coloured wall-maps of the schoolroom) the red expanse of Europe, the green bulk of America, or the huge yellow territory of the Asiatics. He runs off in a discursive stanza in company with the bird-nesting truant. Like a Greek divinity leaning out of Olympus, he watches a pitched battle between bands of these diminutive Stone-age savages belonging to rival schools. With tender humour he notes the rosy beginning of a childish love-idyll between some small Amazon and a smaller urchin whom she has taken under her protection.

What are weather and season to this incessant panorama of childhood? The pigmy people trudge through the snow on moor and hillside; wade down flooded roads; are not to be daunted by wind or rain, frost or the white smother of "millers and bakers at fisticuffs." Most beautiful picture of all, he sees them travelling schoolward by that late moonlight which now and again in the winter months precedes the tardy dawn.

Had the " Erster Schulgang " ended here, I cannot but think the poem would have been worth preserving. This vision, however, is but a prelude, and as a prelude it is perhaps disproportionately long. A blue-eyed, flaxen-haired German mädchen of four is the heroine of this " first day at school "—Altegans's own little maiden, perchance, in the years that were; but of this there is no evidence.

What an eventful day in each one's life, he moralises, is this first day at school—no other day more truly momentous; and yet how few of us have any recollection of it!

The first school-going is the most daring of all adventures, the most romantic of all marvellous quests. Palæocrystic voyages, searches for north-west passages, wanderings in the dwarf-peopled forests of dusky continents are trifling matters compared with this. This is the veritable quest for the Sangreal! " Each smallest lad as he crosses the home-threshold that morning is a Columbus steering to a new world, to golden Indies that truly lie—at last—beyond the sunset. He is a little Ulysses outward-bound on a long voyage, where-through help him, thou dear Heaven, past the Calypso Isles and Harpy-shores lest he perish miserably! "

And thus, continues Altegans, after a page or two of such simple philosophising, little " blue-eyed flax-head " goes forth, with well-stored satchel and primer, and with a mother's kiss; gleeful, it may be; reluctant, perchance; into the world, nay into the universe, nay into the illimitable cosmos beyond these flaming star-walls; for of all future knowing and loving, and serving and revolt against service, is not this the actual beginning?

Very prettily does he picture the trot of the small

feet along the narrow pathway through the fields where the old Adam—the " red earth " of the furrows, he means—is still visible through the soft green blades of the spring corn; the walk along the lanes with their high hedges, and banks of wild flowers, and overhanging clouds of leaf and blossom; the arrival at the rustic schoolhouse; the crowd of strange faces; the buzz and noise of conning and repetition.

And then, behold! as the timid new scholar sits on the well-polished bench, now glancing about at her unknown comrades, now trying to recollect the names and shapes of the letters in her primer, the schoolhouse vanishes into transparent air, and the good Altegans perceives that this little maiden is no longer sitting among German fields!

Instead of the young corn, papyrus-reeds are growing tall and thick; the palm has replaced the northern pine; Nilus, that ancient river, is flowing past; far away in the distance he descries the peaks of the Pyramids, while behind the child rises a huge granite obelisk sculptured from apex to base with hieroglyphic characters. For, he asks by way of explaining this startling dissolving view, does not every child when it learns the alphabet sit in the shadow of the sculptured " needle-pillars " of Egypt the ancient?

Where could this simple village shoemaker have picked up this crumb of knowledge? It seems only yesterday that Professor Max Müller thought it a matter of sufficient novelty to tell us that " whenever we wrote an *a* or a *b* or a *c*, we wrote what was originally a hieroglyphic picture. Our L is the crouching lion; our F the cerastes, a serpent with two horns; our H the Egyptian picture of a sieve."

"O thou tenderest newly-blossomed little soul-and-body, thou freshest-formed flower-image of man," exclaims the emotional Altegans, "how strange to see thee shining with this newness in the shadow of the old, old brain-travail, the old, old wisdom of a world dead and buried centuries ago; how strange to see thee, thou tiny prospective ancestress, struggling with the omnipotent tradition of antiquity!

"For, of a truth, of all things in this world-round there is nothing more marvellous than those carven characters, than the many-vocabled colonies which have descended from them, and which have peopled the earth with so much speech and thought, so much joy and sorrow, so much hope and despair.

"Beware of these, thou little child, for they are strong to kill and strong to save! Verily, they are living things, stronger than powers and principalities. When Moses dropped the stone tablets, the wise Rabbis say the letters flew to and fro in the air; the visible form alone was broken, but the divine law remains intact for ever. They are, indeed, alive—they are the visible shapes of what thou canst not see, of what can never die.

"Heed well these strong ones—Aleph the Ox, the golden cherub whose mighty wings spread athwart the Temple of Solomon, the winged bull that men worshipped in Assyria; him and all his fellows heed thou carefully! They are the lords of the earth, the tyrants of the souls of men. No one can escape them save him alone who hath mastered them. He whom they master is lost, for 'the letter killeth.' But these things thou dost not yet understand."

"Close now thy book, little learner. How Socrates and Solomon would have marvelled to hear the things

that thou shalt learn! Close thy book; clap thy hands gladly on the outgoing (*Scottice* skaling) song; hie thee home! Thy dear mother awaits thee, and thy good grey grandfather will look down on thee with shrewd and kindly eyes, and question thee gaily. Run home, thou guileless scholarling; thy mother's hands are fain of thee."

A little abruptly perhaps, unless we recollect that half is greater than the whole, the simple poet flies off at a tangent from his theme, and muses to his own heart:

"And we, too, are children; this, our first long day at school. Oh, gentle hand, be fain for us when we come home at eventide; question us tenderly, Thou good Father, Thou ancient One of days."

So the "Erster Schulgang" closes.

It may be that through temperament or personal associations I have over-valued it. The reader must judge. In any case, you dead, unknown, gentle-hearted Old-Goose, to me it has been a pleasant task to visit in fancy your beloved village of Wieheisstes in the romantic crag-and-fir region of Schlaraffen-land, and to write these pages about your poem and yourself.

AT A WAYSIDE STATION

L'adorable hasard d'être père est tombé
Sur ma tête, et m'a fait une douce fêlure.

HUGO.

AT A WAYSIDE STATION

"GOOD-BYE, my darling!"

The voice shot out cheerily from the window of a second-class carriage at a small suburban station. The speaker evidently did not care a pin who heard him. He was a bustling, rubicund, white-whiskered and white-waistcoated little man of about sixty. As I glanced in his direction I saw that his wife—a faded blue-eyed woman, with a genius for reserve — was placidly settling herself in her seat.

Perception of these details was instantaneous.

"Good-bye, my darling!"

"Good-bye, papa!"

The reply, in a clear, fresh voice, was almost startling in its promptitude.

I looked round; and then for the next minute and a half, I laughed quietly to myself.

For, first of all, the bright little girl, the flower of the flock, the small, radiant beauty to whom that voice should have belonged, was a maiden of five and thirty, hopelessly uncomely, and irredeemably high-coloured.

The unmistakable age, the unprepossessing appearance, were thrown into ludicrous contrast by the girlish coyness and bashfulness of her demeanour. When her eyes were not raised to her father's face, they were cast down with a demureness that was altogether irresistible.

The little man mopped his bald scalp, hurriedly arranged some of his belongings in the rack, abruptly darted out another bird-like look, and repeated his farewell.

"Good-bye, my darling!"

"Good-bye, papa!"

It was as though he had touched the spring of a dutiful automaton.

The carriage doors were slammed, the guard whistled, the driver signalled, the train started.

"Good-bye, my darling!"

"Good-bye, papa!"

Comic as the whole scene was, its conclusion was a relief. One felt that if "Good-bye, my darling," had been repeated a hundred times, "Good-bye, papa," would have been sprung out in response with the same prompt, pleasant inflection, the same bright, ridiculous, mechanical precision.

She tripped, with the vivacity of coquettish maidenhood, for a few paces along the platform beside the carriage window, stood still a moment, watching the carriages as they swept round the curve, and then, resuming her air of unapproachable reserve, ascended the station steps.

The reaction was as sudden as it was unexpected. The ripple of her white muslin dress had scarcely vanished before I felt both ashamed and sorry that I had been so much amused. The whole situation assumed a different aspect, and I acknowledged with remorse that I had been a cruel and despicable onlooker. The humour of the incident had mastered me; the pathos of it now stared me in the face.

As I thought of her unpleasing colour, of her ineligible uncomeliness, of her five and thirty unmarried years, I wondered how I could have ever

had the heart to laugh at what might well have been a cause for tears.

The pity of it! That sweet fresh voice—and it *was* singularly sweet and fresh—seemed the one charm left of the years of a woman's charms and a woman's chances. The harmless prim ways and little coy tricks of manner, so old-fashioned and out of place, seemed to belong to the epoch of powder and patches. They were irrefutable evidence of the seclusion in which she had lived—of the little world of home which had never been invaded by any rash, handsome, self-confident young man.

As I thought of the garrulous pride and affection of her father, I knew that she must be womanly and lovable in a thousand ways which a stranger could not guess at. If no one else in the world had any need of her, she was at least *his* darling; but, ah! the pity of the unfulfilled mission, of the beautiful possibilities unrealised, of the honour and holiness of motherhood denied. She would never have any little being to call "*her* darling," to rear in love and sorrow, in solicitude and joy; never one even to lose

> "When God draws a new angel so
> Through a house of a man up to His,"

—to lose and yet know it is not lost, to surrender and yet feel it is safe for ever; preserved beyond change and the estrangement of the years and the sad transformations of temperament—a sinless babe for evermore.

"Good-bye, my darling!"

How strangely, how tranquilly, with what little sense of change must the years have gone by for father and daughter! One could not but conjecture whether he saw her now as she actually appeared in

my eyes, or whether she was still to him the small, inexpressibly lovely creature of thirty years ago. Love plays curious tricks with our senses. No man ever yet married an ugly woman, and time is slow to wrinkle a beloved face. To him, doubtless, she was yet a child, and at forty or fifty she would be a child still.

Then I thought of her as an infant in her cradle, and I saw the faded, reserved woman and the florid little man, a youthful couple, leaning over it, full of the happiness and wonder that come with the first baby. I thought of the endearing helplessness of those early weeks; of the anguish of the first baby troubles; of the scares and terrors, of the prayers and thankfulness; of the delight in the first smile: of the blissful delusions that their little angel had begun to notice, that she had tried to speak, that she had recognised some one; of the inexplicable brightness which made their home, the rooms, the garden, the very street seem a bit of heaven which had fallen to earth; of the foolish father buying the little one toys, perhaps even a book, which she would not be able to handle for many a day to come; of the more practical mother who exhausted her ingenuity in hoods and frocks, bootees, and dainty vanities of lace and ribbon.

I thought of the little woman when she first began to toddle; of her resolute efforts to carry weights almost as heavy as herself; of her inarticulate volubility; of the marvellous growth of intelligence—the quickness to understand, associated with the inability to express herself; of her indefatigable imitative faculty; and of the delight of her father in all these.

Then, as years went by, I saw how she had become

essential to his happiness, how all his thoughts encompassed her, how she influenced him, how much better a man she made him; and as still the years elapsed, I took into account her ambitions, her day-dreams, her outlook into the world of men and women, and I wondered whether she too had her half-completed romance, of which, perchance, no one, not even her father, had an inkling. How near they were to each other; and yet, after all, how far apart in many things they might still be!

Her father's darling! Just Heaven! if we have to give account of every foolish word, for how much senseless and cruel laughter shall we have to make reckoning? For, as I let my thoughts drift to and fro about these matters, I remembered the thousands who have many children but no darling; the mothers whose hearts have been broken, the fathers whose grey hairs have been brought down in sorrow to the grave; and I mused on those in whom faith and hope have been kept alive by prayer and the merciful recollection of a never-to-be-forgotten childhood.

When I reached home I took down the volume in which one of our poets [1] has spoken in tenderest pathos of these last in the beautiful verses entitled—

TWO SONS

I have two sons, Wife—
  Two and yet the same;
One his wild way runs, Wife,
  Bringing us to shame.
The one is bearded, sunburnt, grim, and fights across the sea;
The other is a little child who sits upon your knee.

[1] Robert Buchanan.

One is fierce and bold, Wife,
As the wayward deep,
Him no arms could hold, Wife,
Him no breast could keep.
He has tried our hearts for many a year, not broken them; for he
Is still the sinless little one that sits upon your knee.

One may fall in fight, Wife—
Is he not our son?
Pray with all your might, Wife,
For the wayward one;
Pray for the dark, rough soldier who fights across the sea,
Because you love the little shade who smiles upon your knee.

One across the foam, Wife,
As I speak may fall;
But this one at home, Wife,
Cannot die at all.
They both are only one, and how thankful should we be
We cannot lose the darling son who sits upon your knee.

This one cannot die at all! To how many has this bright little shadow of the vanished years been an enduring solace and an undying hope! And if God's love be no less than that of an earthly father, what mercies, what long-suffering, what infinite pity may we grown-up, wilful and wayward children not owe to His loving memory of our sinless infancy! But for those happy parents who, as the years have gone by, have never failed to see the "sinless little one," now in the girl or boy, now in the young man or maiden, and now in these no longer young but still darlings, what a gracious providence has encompassed their lives!

When I had smiled in witless amusement I had not

thought of all this; and even now it had not occurred to me that this could have been no rare and exceptional case—that there must be many such darlings in the world. That same evening, however, as I glanced over the paper, I came across the following notice in the column of "Births, Deaths, and Marriages":

"In memoriam, Louisa S——, who died suddenly on August 22, aged 40; my youngest, most beloved, and affectionate daughter."

W. V. HER BOOK

HER BIRTHDAY

We are still on the rosy side of the apple; but this is the last Saturday in September, and we cannot expect many more golden days between this and the cry of the cuckoo. But what a summer we have had, thanks to one of W. V.'s ingenious suggestions! She came to us in April, when the world is still a trifle bare and the wind somewhat too bleak for any one to get comfortably lost in the Forest or cast up on a coral reef; so we have made her birthday a movable feast, and whenever a fine free Saturday comes round we devote it to thankfulness that she has been born, and to the joy of our both being alive together.

W. V. sleeps in an eastern room, and accordingly the sun rises on that side of the house. Under the eaves and just above her window the martins have a nest plastered against the wall, and their chattering awakens her in the first freshness of the new morning. She watches the black shadows of the birds fluttering on the sunny blind, as, first one and then another, they race up to the nest, and vibrate in the air a moment before darting into it. When her interest has begun to flag, she steals in to me in her nightdress, and tugs gently at my beard till I waken and sit up. Unhappily her mother wakens too. "What, more birthdays!" she exclaims in a tone of stern disapproval; whereat W. V. and I laugh, for evasion of domestic law is the sweet marjoram of our salad.

But it *is* possible to coax even a Draconian parent into assent, and oh!

> Flower of the may,
> If mamsie will not say her nay,
> W. won't care what any one may say!

We first make a tour of the garden, and it is delightful to observe W. V. prying about with happy, eager eyes, to detect whether nature has been making any new thing during the dim, starry hours when people are too sound asleep to notice; delightful to hear her little screams of ecstasy when she has discovered something she has not seen before. It is singular how keenly she notes every fresh object, and in what quaint and pretty turns of phrase she expresses her glee and wonderment. "Oh, father, haven't the bushes got their hands quite full of flowers?" "Aren't the buds the trees' little girls?"

This morning the sun was blissfully warm, and the air seemed alive with the sparkle of the dew, which lay thick on every blade and leaf. As we went round the gravel walks we perceived how completely all the earlier flowers had vanished; even the lovely sweet peas were almost over. We have still, however, the single dahlias, and marigolds, and nasturtiums, on whose level leaves the dew stood shining like globules of quicksilver; and the tall Michaelmas daisies make quite a white-topped thicket along the paling, while the rowan-berries are burning in big red bunches over the western hedge.

In the corner near the limes we came upon a marvellous spectacle—a huge old spider hanging out in his web in the sun, like a grim old fisherman floating in the midst of his nets at sea. A hand's breadth off, young bees and newborn flies were busy with the

low perennial sunflowers; he watching them motionlessly, with his gruesome shadow silhouetted on a leaf hard by. In his immediate neighbourhood the fine threads of his web were invisible, but a little distance away one could distinguish their concentric curves, grey on green. Every now and then we heard the snapping of a stalk overhead, and a leaf pattered down from the limes. Every now and then, too, slight *surges* of breeze ran shivering through the branches. Nothing distracted the intense vigilance of the crafty fisherman. Scores of glimmering insects grazed the deadly snare, but none touched it. It must have been tantalising, but the creature's sullen patience was invincible. W. V. at last dropped a piece of leaf-stalk on his web, out of curiosity. In a twinkling he was at the spot, and the fragment was dislodged with a single jerk.

This is one of the things in which she delights—the quiet observation of the ways of creatures. Nothing would please her better, could she but dwarf herself into an "aglet-baby," than to climb into those filmy meshes and have a chat in the sunshine with the wily ogre. She has no mistrust, she feels no repulsion from anything that has life. There is a warm place in her heart for the cool, dry toad, and she loves the horned snail, if not for his own sake, at least for his "darling little house" and the silver track he leaves on the gravel.

Of course she wanted a story about a spider. I might have anticipated as much. Well, there was King Robert the Bruce, who was saved by a spider from his enemies when they were seeking his life.

"And if they had found him, would they have sworded off his head? Really, father? Like Oliver Crumball did Charles King's?"

Her grammar was defective, but her surmises were beyond dispute; they would. Then there was the story of Sir Samuel Brown, who took his idea of a suspension bridge from a web which hung—but W. V. wanted something much more engrossing.

"Wasn't there never no awful big spider that made webs in the Forest?"

"And caught lions and bears?"

She nodded approvingly. Oh, yes, there was—once upon a time.

"And was there a little girl there?"

There must have been for the story to be worth telling; but the breakfast bell broke in on the opening chapter of that little girl's incredible adventures.

After breakfast we followed the old birthday custom, and "plunged" into the depths of the Forest. Some persons, I have heard, call our Forest the "East Woods," and report that though they are pleasant enough in summer, they are rather meagre and limited in area. Now, it is obvious that it would be impossible to "plunge" into anything less than a forest. Certainly, when W. V. is with me I am conscious of the Forest — the haunted, enchanted, aboriginal Forest; and I see with something of her illumined vision, the vision of W. V., who can double for herself the comfort of a fire on a chilly day by running into the next room and returning with the tidings, "It's *very* cold in the woods!"

If you are courageous enough to leave the paths and hazard yourself among the underwood and the litter of bygone autumns, twenty paces will take you to the small Gothic doors of the Oak-men; twenty more to the cavern of the Great Bruin and the pollard

tree on the top of which the foxes live; while yet another twenty, and you are at the burrows of the kindliest of all insects, the leaf-cutter bees. Once—in parenthesis—when a little maid was weeping because she had lost her way at dusk in the Forest mazes, it was a leaf-cutter bee that tunnelled a straight line through the trees, so that the nearest road lamp, miles away, twinkled right into the Forest, and she was able to guide herself home. Indeed, it will only take ten minutes, if you do not dawdle, to get to the dreadful webs of the Iron Spider, and when you do reach that spot, the wisest thing you can do is to follow the example of the tiny flame-elf when a match is blown out—clap on your cap of darkness and scuttle back to fairyland.

What magical memories have we two of the green huddle and the dreamy lawns of that ancient and illimitable Forest! We know the bosky dingles where we shall find pappa-trees, on whose lower branches a little girl may discover something to eat when she is good enough to deserve it. We know where certain green-clad foresters keep store of fruits which are supposed, by those who know no better, to grow only in orchards by tropical seas. Of course every one is aware that in the heart of the Forest there is a granite fountain; but only we two have learned the secret that its water is the Water of Heart's-ease, and that if we continue to drink it we shall never grow really old. We have still a great deal of the Forest to explore; we have never reached the glade where the dog-daisies have to be chained because they grow so exceedingly wild; nor have we found the blue thicket—it is blue because it is so distant—from which some of the stars come up into the dusk when it grows late; but when W. V. has got her

galloping-horse-bicycle we shall start with the first sunshine some morning, and give the whole day to the quest.

We lowly folk dine before most people think of lunching, and so dinner was ready when we arrived home. Now, as decorum at table is one of the cardinal virtues, W. V. dines by proxy. It is her charming young friend Gladys who gives us the pleasure of her company. It is strange how many things this bewildering daughter of mine can do as Gladys, which she cannot possibly accomplish as W. V. W. V. is unruly, a chatterbox, careless, or at least forgetful, of the elegances of the social board; whereas Gladys is a model of manners, an angel in a bib. W. V. cannot eat crusts, and rebels against porridge at breakfast; Gladys idolises crusts, and as for porridge—"I *am* surprised your little girl does not like porridge. It is *so* good for her."

After dinner, as I lay smoking in the garden lounge to-day, I fell a-thinking of W. V. and Gladys, and the numerous other little maids in whom this tricksy sprite has been masquerading since she came into the world five years ago. She began the small comedy before she had well learned to balance herself on her feet. As she sat in the middle of the carpet we would play at looking for the baby—where has the baby gone? have *you* seen the baby?—and, oddly enough, she would take a part and pretend to wonder, or perhaps actually did wonder, what had become of herself, till at last we would discover her on the floor —to her own astonishment and irrepressible delight.

Then, as she grew older, it was amusing to observe how she would drive away the naughty self, turn it

literally out of doors, and return as the "Smiling Winifred." I presume she grew weary, as human nature is apt to grow, of a face which is wreathed in amaranthine smiles; so the Smiling Winifred vanished, and we were visited by various sweet children with lovely names, of whom Gladys is the latest and the most indefatigable. I cannot help laughing when I recall my three-year-old rebel listening for a few moments to a scolding, and when she considered that the ends of justice had been served, exclaiming, "I put my eyes down!"—which meant that so far as she was concerned the episode was now definitively closed.

My day-dream was broken by W. V. flying up to me with fern fronds fastened to her shoulders for wings. She fluttered round me, then flopped into my lap, and put her arms about my neck. "If I was a real swan, father, I would cuddle your head with my wings."

"Ah, well, you are a real duck, Diddles, and that will do quite as well."

She was thinking of that tender Irish legend of the Children of Lir, changed into swans by their stepmother and doomed to suffer heat and cold, tempest and hunger, homelessness and sorrow, for nine hundred years, till the sound of the first Christian bell changed them again—to frail, aged mortals. It was always the sister, she knows, who solaced and strengthened the brothers beside the terrible sea of Moyle, sheltering them under her wings and warming them against her bosom. In such a case as this an only child is at a disadvantage. Even M'rao, her furry playmate, might have served as a bewitched brother, but after many months of somnolent for-

bearance M'rao ventured into the great world beyond our limes, and returned no more.

Flower of the quince,
Puss once kissed Babs, and ever since
She thinks he *must* be an enchanted prince.

In a moment she was off again, an angel, flying about the garden and in and out of the house in the performance of helpful offices for some one, or, perchance, a fairy, for her heaven is a vague and strangely-peopled region. Long ago she told me that the moon was "put up" by a black man—a saying which puzzled me until I came to understand that this negro divinity could only have been the "divine Dark" of the old Greek poet. Of course she says her brief, simple prayers; but how can one convey to a child's mind any but the most provisional and elemental conceptions of the Invisible? Once I was telling her the story of a wicked king, who put his trust in a fort of stone on a mountain peak, and scoffed at a prophet God had sent to warn him. "He wasn't very wise," said W. V., "for God and Jesus and the angels and the fairies are cleverer'n we are; they have wings." The "cleverness" of God has deeply impressed her. He can make rain and see through walls. She noticed some stone crosses in a sculptor's yard some time ago, and remarked: "Jesus was put on one of those;" then, after some reflection: "Who was it put Jesus on the cross? Was it the church people, father?" Well, when one comes to think of it, it was precisely the church people—"not these church people, dear, but the church people of hundreds of years ago, when Jesus was alive." She had seen the world's tragedy in the stained glass windows and had drawn her own

conclusion—the people who crucified would be the most likely to make a picture of the crucifixion; Christ's friends would want to forget it and never to speak of it.

In the main she does not much concern herself with theology or the unseen. She lives in the senses. Once, indeed, she began to communicate some interesting reminiscences of what had happened "before she came here," to this planet; but something interrupted her, and she has not attempted any further revelation. There is nothing more puzzling in the world to her, I fancy, than an echo. She has forgotten that her own face in the mirror was quite as bewildering. A high wind at night is not a pleasant fellow to have shaking your window and muttering down your chimney; but an intrepid father with a yard of brown oak is more than a match for *him*. Thunder and lightning she regards as "great friends; they always come together." She is more perceptive of their companionship than of their air of menace towards mankind. Darkness, unless it be on the staircase, does not trouble her: when we have said good-night out goes the gas. But there seems to be some quality or influence in the darkness which makes her affectionate and considerate. Once and again when she has slept with me and wakened in the dead of night she has been most apologetic and self-abasing. She is so sorry to disturb me, she knows she is a bother, but *would* I give her a biscuit or a drink of water?

She has all along been a curious combination of tenderness and savagery. In a sudden fit of motherhood she will bring me her dolly to kiss, and ten minutes later I shall see it lying undressed and abandoned in a corner of the room. She is a Spartan

parent, and slight is the chance of her children being spoiled either by sparing the rod or lack of stern monition. It is not so long ago that we heard a curious sound of distress in the dining-room, and on her mother hurrying downstairs to see what was amiss, there was W. V. chastising her recalcitrant babe—and doing the weeping herself. This appeared to be a good opportunity for pointing a moral. It was clear now that she knew what it was to be naughty and disobedient, and if she punished these faults so severely in her own children she must expect me to deal with her manifold and grievous offences in the same way. She looked very much sobered and concerned, but a few moments later she brought me a stout oak walking-stick: "Would that do, father?" She shows deep commiseration for the poor *and* old; grey hairs and penury are sad bed-fellows; but for the poor who are not old I fear she feels little sympathy. Perhaps we, or the conditions of life, are to blame for this limitation of feeling, for when we spoke to her of certain poor little girls with no mothers, she rejoined: "Why don't you take them, then?" Our compassion which stopped short of so simple a remedy must have seemed suspiciously like a pretence.

To me one of the chief wonders of childhood has been the manner in which this young person has picked up words, has learned to apply them, has coined them for herself, and has managed to equip herself with a stock of quotations. When she was yet little more than two and a half she applied of her own accord the name Dapple-grey to her first wooden horse. Then Dapple-grey was pressed into guardianship of her sleeping dolls, with this stimulative quotation: "Brave dog, watching by the baby's bed." There was some vacillation, I recollect, as to

whether it was a laburnum or a St. Bernard that saved travellers in the snow, but that was exceptional. The word "twins" she adapted prettily enough. Trying once in an emotional moment to put her love for me into terms of gold currency, she added: "And I love mother just the same; you two are twins, you know." A little while after the University boat-race she drew my attention to a doll in a shop-window: "Isn't it beautiful? And look at its Oxford eyes!" To "fussle one," to disturb one by making a fuss, seems at once fresh and useful; "sorefully" is an acutely expressive adverb; when you have to pick your steps in wet weather the road may be conveniently described as "picky;" don't put wild roses on the cloth at dinner lest the maid should "crumb" them away; and when one has a cold in the head how can one describe the condition of one's nose except as "hoarse"? "Lost in sad thought," "Now I have something to my heart's content," "Few tears are my portion," are among the story-book phrases which she has assimilated for week-day use. When she was being read to out of Kingsley's *Heroes*, she asked her mother to substitute "the Ladies" for "the Gorgons." She did not like the *sound* of the word; "it makes me," drawing her breath with a sort of shiver through her teeth, "it makes me pull myself together." Once when she broke into a sudden laugh, for sheer glee of living I suppose, she exclaimed: "I am just like a little squirrel biting myself." Her use of the word "live" is essential poetry; the spark "lives" inside the flint, the catkins "live" in the Forest; and she pointed out to me the "lines" down a horse's legs where the blood "lives." A signboard on a piece of waste land caused her some perplexity. It was not "The public

are requested" this time, but "Forbidden to shoot rubbish here." Either big game or small deer she could have understood; but—"Who *wants* to shoot rubbish, father?"

Have I sailed out of the trades into the doldrums in telling of this commonplace little body?—for, after all, she is merely the average, healthy, merry, teasing, delightful mite who tries to take the whole of life at once into her two diminutive hands. Ah, well, I want some record of these good, gay days of our early companionship; something that may still survive when this right hand is dust; a testimony that there lived at least one man who was joyously content with the small mercies which came to him in the beaten way of nature. For neither of us, little woman, can these childish, hilarious days last much longer now. Five arch, happy faces look out at me from the sections of an oblong frame; all W. V.s, but no two the same W. V. The sixth must go into another frame. You must say good-bye to the enchanted Forest, little lass, and travel into strange lands; and the laws of infancy are harder than the laws of old Wales. For these ordained that when a person remained in a far country under such conditions that he could not freely revisit his own, his title to the ancestral soil was not extinguished till the ninth man; the ninth man could utter his "cry over the abyss," and save his portion. But when you have gone into the world beyond, and can no more revisit the Forest freely, no ear will ever listen to your "cry over the abyss."

When she had at last tired herself with angelic visits and thrown aside her fern wings, she returned to me and wanted to know if I would play at shop.

No, I would not play at shop; I would be neither purchaser nor proprietor, the lady she called "Cash" nor the stately gentleman she called "Sign." Would I be a king, then, and refuse my daughter to her (she would be a prince) unless she built a castle in a single night; "better'n't" she bring her box of bricks and the dominoes? No, like Cæsar, I put by the crown. She took my refusals cheerfully. On the whole, she is tractable in these matters. "Fathers," she once told me, "know better than little girls, don't they?" "Oh, dear, no! how could they? Fathers have to go into the city; they don't go to school like little girls." Doubtless there *was* something in that, but she persisted, "Well, even if little girls do go to school, fathers are wiser and know best." From which one father at least may derive encouragement. Well, would I blow soap-bubbles?

I think it was the flying thistledown in June which first gave us the cue of the soap-bubbles. What a delightful game it is; and there is a knack, too, in blowing these spheres of fairy glass and setting them off on their airy flight. Till you have blown bubbles you have no conception how full of waywardness and freakish currents the air is.

Oh, you who are sad at heart, or weary of thought, or irritable with physical pain, coax, beg, borrow, or steal a four- or five-year-old, and betake you to blowing bubbles in the sunshine of your recluse garden. Let the breeze be just a little brisk to set your bubbles drifting. Fill some of them with tobacco smoke, and with the wind's help bombard the old fisherman in his web. As the opaline globes break and the smoke escapes in a white puff along the grass or among the leaves, you shall think of historic battlefields, and muse whether the greater

game was not quite as childish as this, and "sorefully" less innocent. The smoke-charges are only a diversion; it is the crystal balls which delight most. The colours of all the gems in the world run molten through their fragile films. And what visions they contain for crystal-gazers! Among the gold and green, the rose and blue, you see the dwarfed reflection of your own trees and your own home floating up into the sunshine. These are your possessions, your surroundings—so lovely, so fairylike in the bubble; in reality so prosaic and so inadequate when one considers the rent and rates. To W. V. the bubbles are like the wine of the poet—"full of strange continents and new discoveries."

> Flower of the sloe,
> When chance annuls the worlds we blow,
> Where does the soul of beauty in them go?

"Tell me a story of a little girl who lived in a bubble," she asked when she had tired of creating fresh microcosms.

I lifted her on to my knee, and as she settled herself comfortably she drew my right arm across her breast and began to nurse it.

"Well, once upon a time——"

HER BOOK

HER BOOK

THE INQUISITION

I WOKE at dead of night;
The room was still as death;
All in the dark I saw a sight
Which made me catch my breath.

Although she slumbered near
The silence hung so deep
I leaned above her crib to hear
If it were death or sleep.

As low—all quick—I leant,
Two large eyes thrust me back;
Dark eyes—too wise—which gazed intent;
Blue eyes transformed to black.

Heavens! how those steadfast eyes
Their eerie vigil kept!
Was this some angel in disguise
Who searched us while we slept;

Who winnow'd every sin,
Who tracked each slip and fall,
One of God's spies—not Babbykin,
Not Babbykin at all?

Day came with golden air;
She caught the beams and smiled;
No masked inquisitor was there,
Only a babbling child!

THE FIRST MIRACLE

THE huge weeds bent to let her pass,
And sometimes she crept under;
She plunged through gulfs of flowery grass;
She filled both hands with plunder.

The buttercups grew tall as she,
Taller the big dog-daisies;
And so she lost herself, you see,
Deep in the jungle mazes.

A wasp twang'd by; a hornèd snail
Leered from a great-leafed docken;
She shut her eyes, she raised a wail
Deplorable, heart-broken.

"Mamma!" Two arms, flashed out of space
Miraculously, caught her;
Fond mouth was pressed to tearful face—
"What *is* it, little daughter?"

BY THE FIRESIDE

I

RED-BOSOMED Robin, in the hard white weather
She marks thee light upon the ice to rest;
She sees the wintry glass glow with thy breast
And let thee warm thy feet at thine own feather.

II

IN the April sun at baby-house she plays.
Her rooms are traced with stones and bits of bricks;
For warmth she lays a hearth with little sticks,
And one bright crocus makes a merry blaze!

THE RAIDER

Her happy, wondering eyes had ne'er
Till now ranged summer meadows o'er:
She would keep stopping everywhere
To fill with flowers her pinafore.

But when she saw how, green and wide,
Field followed field, and each was gay
With endless flowers, she laughed—then sighed,
"No use!" and threw her spoils away.

BABSIE-BIRD

In the orchard blithely waking,
Through the blossom, loud and clear,
Pipes the goldfinch, "Day is breaking;
Waken, Babsie; May is here!
Bloom is laughing; lambs are leaping;
Every new green leaflet sings;
Five chipp'd eggs will soon be cheeping;
God be praised for song and wings!"

Warm and ruddy as an ember,
Lilting sweet from bush to stone,
On the moor in chill November
Flits the stone-chat all alone:
"Snow will soon drift up the heather;
Days are short, nights cold and long;
Meanwhile in this glinting weather
God be thanked for wings and song!"

Round from Maytime to November
Babsie lilts upon the wing,
Far too happy to remember
Thanks or praise for anything;
Save at bedtime, laughing sinner,
When she gaily lisps along,
For the wings and song within her—
"Thank you, God, for wings and song!"

THE ORCHARD OF STARS

Amid the orchard grass she'd stood
and watch'd with childish glee
The big bright burning apples shower'd
like star-falls from the tree;

So when the autumn meteors fell
she cried, with outspread gown,
"Oh my, papa, look! Isn't God
just shaking apples down?"

THE SWEET PEA

Oh, what has been born in the night
To bask in this blithe summer morn?
She peers, in a dream of delight,
For something new-made or new-born.

Not spider-webs under the tree,
Not swifts in their cradle of mud,
But—"Look, father, Sweet Mrs. Pea
Has two little babies in bud!"

BROOK-SIDE LOGIC

As the brook caught the blossoms she cast,
  Such a wonder gazed out from her face!
Why, the water was all running past,
  Yet the brook never budged from its place.

Oh, the magic of what was so clear!
  I explained. And enlightened her? Nay—
" Why but, father, I *couldn't* stay here
  If I always was running away! "

BUBBLE-BLOWING

Our plot is small, but sunny limes
  Shut out all cares and troubles;
And there my little girl at times
  And I sit blowing bubbles.

The screaming swifts race to and fro,
  Bees cross the ivied paling,
Draughts lift and set the globes we blow
  In freakish currents sailing.

They glide, they dart, they soar, they break.
  Oh, joyous little daughter,
What lovely coloured worlds we make,
  What crystal flowers of water!

One, green and rosy, slowly drops;
  One soars and shines a minute,
And carries to the lime-tree tops
  Our home, reflected in it.

The gable, with cream rose in bloom,
She sees from roof to basement;
"Oh, father, there's your little room!"
She cries in glad amazement.

To her enchanted with the gleam,
The glamour and the glory,
The bubble home's a home of dream,
And I must tell its story;

Tell what we did, and how we played,
Withdrawn from care and trouble—
A father and his merry maid,
Whose house was in a bubble!

NEW VERSION OF AN OLD GAME

The storm had left the rain-butt brimming;
A dahlia leaned across the brink;
Its mirrored self, beneath it swimming,
Lit the dark water, gold and pink.

Oh, rain, far fallen from heights of azure—
Pure rain, from heavens so cold and lone—
Dost thou not feel, and thrill with pleasure
To feel a flower's heart in thine own?

Enjoy thy beauty, and bestow it,
Fair dahlia, fenced from harm, mishap!
"See, Babs, this flower—and this below it."
She looked, and screamed in rapture—"Snap!"

THE GOLDEN SWING-BOAT

Across the low dim fields we caught
  Faint music from a distant band—
So sweet i' the dusk one might have thought
  It floated up from elfin-land.

Then, o'er the tree-tops' hazy blue
  We saw the new moon, low i' the air:
" Look, Dad," she cried, " a shuggy-shue!
  Why this must be a fairies' fair! "

ANOTHER NEWTON'S APPLE

We tried to show with lamp and ball
  How simply day and night were " made ";
How earth revolved, and how through all
  One half was sunshine, one was shade.

One side, tho' turned and turned again,
  Was always bright. She mused and frowned,
Then flashed—" It's just an apple, then,
  'at's always rosy half way round! "

Oh, boundless tree of ranging blue,
  Star-fruited through thy heavenly leaves,
Be, if thou canst be, good unto
  This apple-loving babe of Eve's

NATURULA NATURANS

Beside the water and the crumbs
  She laid her little birds of clay,
For—" When some other sparrow comes
  Perhaps they'll fly away."

Ah, golden dream, to clothe with wings
A heart of springing joy; to know
Two lives i' the happy sum of things
To her their bliss will owe!

Day dawned; they had not taken flight,
Tho' playmates called from bush and tree.
She sighed: "I hardly thought they might.
Well,—God's more clever'n me!"

WINGS AND HANDS

God's angels, dear, have six great wings
Of silver and of gold;
Two round their heads, two round their hearts,
Two round their feet they fold.

The angel of a man I know
Has just two hands—so small!
But they're more strong than six gold wings
To keep him from a fall.

FLOWERS INVISIBLE

She'd watched the rose-trees, how they grew
With green hands full of flowers;
Such flowers made *their* hands sweet, she knew
But tenderness made ours.

So now, o'er fevered brow and eyes
Two small cold palms she closes.
"Thanks, darling!" "Oh, mamma," she cries
"Are *my* hands full of roses?"

MAKING PANSIES

"THREE faces in a hood."
Folk called the pansy so
Three hundred years ago.
Of course she understood!

Then, perching on my knee,
She drew her mother's head
To her own and mine, and said—
"That's mother, you, and me!"

And so it comes about
We three, for gladness sake,
Sometimes a pansy make
Before the gas goes out.

HEART-EASE

LAST June—how slight a thing to tell!—
One straggling leaf beneath the limes
Against the sunset rose and fell,
Making a rhythm with coloured rhymes.

No other leaf in all the air
Seemed waking; and my little maid
Watched with me, from the garden-chair,
Its rhythmic play of light and shade.

Now glassy gold, now greenish grey,
It dropped, it lifted. That was all.
Strange I should still feel glad to-day
To have seen that one leaf lift and fall.

"SI J'AVAIS UN ARPENT"

Oh, had I but a plot of earth, on plain or vale or hill,
With running water babbling through, in torrent, spring, or rill,

I'd plant a tree, an olive or an oak or willow-tree,
And build a roof of thatch, or tile, or reed, for mine and me.

Upon my tree a nest of moss, or down, or wool, should hold
A songster—finch or thrush or blackbird with its bill of gold;

Beneath my roof a child, with brown or blond or chestnut hair,
Should find in hammock, cradle or crib a nest, and slumber there.

I ask for but a little plot; to measure my domain,
I'd say to Babs, my bairn of bliss, "Go, alderliefest wean,

"And stand against the rising sun; your shadow on the grass
Shall trace the limits of my world; beyond I shall not pass.

"The happiness one can't attain is dream and glamour-shine!"
These rhymes are Soulary's; the thoughts are Babs's thoughts and mine.

HER FRIEND LITTLEJOHN

HER FRIEND LITTLEJOHN

THE first time Littlejohn saw W. V.—a year or so ago —she was sitting on the edge of a big red flower-pot, into which she had managed to pack herself. A brilliant Japanese sunshade was tilted over her shoulder, and close by stood a large green watering-can. This was her way of "playing at botany," but as the old gardener could not be prevailed upon to water her, there was not as much fun in the game as there ought to have been.

W. V. was accordingly consoling herself with telling "Mr. Sandy" — the recalcitrant gardener — the authentic and incredible story of the little girl who was "just 'scruciatingly good."

Later, on an idyllic afternoon among the heather, Littlejohn heard all about that excellent and too precipitate child, who was so eager to oblige or obey that she rushed off before she could be told what to do; and as this was the only story W. V. knew which had obviously a moral, W. V. made it a great point to explain that "little girls ought not to be too good; *if — they — only — did — what—they—were—told* they would be good enough."

W. V.'s mother had been taken seriously ill a few weeks before, and as a house of sickness is not the best place for a small child, nor a small child the most soothing presence in a patient's room, W. V. had undertaken a marvellous and what seemed an interminable journey into the West Highlands. Her host and hostess were delighted with her and her odd

sayings and quaint, fanciful ways; and she, in the plenitude of her good-nature, extended a cheerful patronage to the grown-up people. Littlejohn had no children of his own, and it was a novel delight, full of charming surprises, to have a sturdy, imperious, sunny-hearted little body of four and a half as his constant companion. The child was pretty enough, but it was the alert, excitable little soul of her which peered and laughed out of her blue eyes that took him captive.

Like most healthy children, W. V. did not understand what sorrow, sickness, or death meant. Indeed it is told of her that she once exclaimed gleefully, "Oh, see, here's a funeral! Which is the bride?" The absence of her mother did not weigh upon her. Once she awoke at night and cried for her; and on one or two occasions, in a sentimental mood, she sighed "I *should* like to see my father! Don't you think we could 'run over'?" The immediate present, its fun and nonsense and grave responsibilities, absorbed all her energies and attention; and what a divine dispensation it is that we who never forget can be forgotten so easily.

I fancy, from what I have heard, that she must have regarded Littlejohn's ignorance of the ways of children as one of her responsibilities. It was really very deplorable to find a great-statured, ruddy-bearded fellow of two and thirty so absolutely wanting in tact, so incapable of "pretending," so destitute of the capacity of rhyming or of telling a story. The way she took him in hand was kindly yet resolute. It began with her banging her head against something and howling. "Don't cry, dear," Littlejohn had entreated, with the crude pathos of an amateur; "come, don't cry."

When W. V. had heard enough of this she looked at him disapprovingly, and said, "You shouldn't say that. You should just laugh and say, 'Come, let me kiss that crystal tear away!'" "Say it!" she added after a pause. This was Littlejohn's first lesson in the airy art of consolation.

Littlejohn as a lyric poet was a melancholy spectacle.

"Now, *you* say, 'Come, let us go,'" W. V. would command.

"I don't know it, dear."

"I'll say half for you—

"Come, let us go where the people sell——"

But Littlejohn hadn't the slightest notion of what they sold.

"Bananas," W. V. prompted; "say it."

"Bananas."

"And what?"

"Oranges?" Littlejohn hazarded.

"Pears!" cried W. V. reproachfully; "say it!"

"Pears."

"And——" with pauses to give her host chances of retrieving his honour; "pine—ap—pèl!—

'Bananas and pears and pine-appèl,'

of course. I don't think you *can* publish a poem."

"I don't think I can, dear," Littlejohn confessed after a roar of laughter.

"Pappa and I published that poem. Pine-appèl made me laugh at first. And after that you say—

'Away to the market! and let us buy
A sparrow to make asparagus pie.'

Say it!"

So in time Littlejohn found his memory becoming rapidly stocked with all sorts of nonsensical rhymes and ridiculous pronunciations.

Inability to rhyme, like inability to reason, is a gift of nature, and one can overlook it, but Littlejohn's sheer imbecility in face of the demand for a story was a sore trial to W. V. After an impatient lesson or two, the way in which he picked up a substitute for imagination was really exceedingly creditable. Having spent a day in the "Forest"—W. V. could pack some of her forests into a nutshell, and feel herself a woodlander of infinite verdure—Littlejohn learned which trees were "pappa-trees"; how to knock and ask if any one was in; how to make the dog inside bark if there was no one; how to get an answer in the affirmative if he asked whether they could give his little girl a biscuit, or a pear, or a plum; how to discover the fork in the branches where the gift would be found, and how to present it to W. V. with an air of inexhaustible surprise and delight. Every Forest is full of "pappa-trees," as every verderer knows; the *crux* of the situation presents itself when the tenant of the tree is cross, or the barking dog intimates that he has gone "to the City."

Now, about a mile from Cloan Den, Littlejohn's house, there was a bit of the real "old ancient" Caledonian Forest. There was not much timber, it is true, but still enough; and occasionally one came across a shattered shell of oak, which might have been a pillar of cloudy foliage in the days when woad was the fashionable dress material. I have reason to believe that W. V. invested all that wild region with a rosy atmosphere of romance for Littlejohn. Every blade of grass and fringe of larch was alive with wood-magic. She trotted about with him holding his

hand, or swinging on before him with her broad boyish shoulders thrown well back and an air of unconscious proprietorship of man and nature.

It was curious to note how her father's stories had taken hold of her, and Littlejohn, with some surprise at himself and at the nature of things at large, began to fancy he saw motive and purpose in some of these fantastic narratives. The legend of the girl that was just "'scruciatingly good" had evidently been intended to correct a possible tendency towards priggishness. The boy whose abnormal badness expressed itself in "I don't care" could not have been so irredeemably wicked, or he would never have succeeded in locking the bear and tiger up in the tree and leaving them there to dine off each other. And all the stories about little girls who got lost—there were several of these—were evidently lessons against fright and incentives to courage and self-confidence.

W. V. quite believed that if a little girl got bewildered in the underwood the grass would whisper "This way, this way!" or some little furry creature would look up at her with its sharp beady eyes and tell her to follow. Even though one were hungry and thirsty as well as lost, there was nothing to be afraid of, if there were only oaks in the Forest. For when once on a time a little girl—whose name, strangely enough, was W. V.—got lost and began to cry, did not the door of an oak-tree open and a little, little, wee man all dressed in green, with green boots and a green feather in his cap, come out and ask her to "step inside," and have some fruit and milk? And didn't he say, "When you get lost, don't keep going this way and going that way and going the other way, but *keep straight on and you are sure to come out at the other side?* Only poor wild

things in cages at the Zoo keep going round and round."

And that is "truly and really," W. V. would add, "because I saw them doing it at the Zoo."

Even at the risk of being tedious, I must finish the story, for it was one that greatly delighted Littlejohn and haunted him in a pleasant fashion. Well, when this little girl who was lost had eaten the fruit and drunk the milk, she asked the wee green oak-man to go with her a little way as it was growing dusk. And he said he would. Then he whistled, and close to, and then farther away, and still farther and farther, other little oak-men whistled in answer, till all the Forest was full of the sound of whistling. And the oak-man shouted, "Will you help this little girl out?" and you could hear "Yes, yes, yes, yes," far away right and left, to the very end of the Forest. And the oak-man walked a few yards with her, and pointed; and she saw another oak and another oak-man; and so she went on from one to another right through the Forest; and she said, "Thank you, Mr. Oak-man," to each of them, and bent down and gave each of them a kiss, and they all laughed because they were pleased, and when she got out she could still hear them laughing quietly together.

Another story that pleased Littlejohn hugely, and he liked W. V. to tell it as he lay in a hollow among the heather with his bonnet pulled down to the tip of his nose, was about the lost little girl who walked among the high grass—it was quite up to her eyes—till she was "tired to death." So she lay down, and just as she was beginning to doze off she heard a very soft voice humming her to sleep, and she felt warm soft arms snuggling her close to a warm breast. And as she was wondering who it could be that was so

kind to her, the soft voice whispered, "It is only mother, dearie; sleep-a-sleep, dearie; only mother cuddling her little girl." And when she woke there was no one there, and she had been lying in quite a little grassy nest in the hollow of the ground.

Littlejohn himself could hardly credit the change which this voluble, piquant, imperious young person had made not only in the ways of the house, but in his very being and in the material landscape itself. One of the oddest and most incongruous things he ever did in his life was to measure W. V. against a tree and inscribe her initials (her father always called her by her initials and she liked that form of her name best), and his own, and the date, above the score which marked her height.

The late summer and the early autumn passed delightfully in this fashion. There was some talk at intervals of W. V. being packed, labelled, and despatched "with care" to her own woods and oak-men in the most pleasant suburb of the great metropolis, but it never came to anything. Her father was persuaded to spare her just a little longer. The patter of the little feet, the chatter of the voluble, cheery voice, had grown well-nigh indispensable to Littlejohn and his wife, for though I have confined myself to Littlejohn's side of the story, I would not have it supposed that W. V.'s charm did not radiate into other lives.

So the cold rain and the drifted leaf, the first frost and the first snow came; and in their train come Christmas and the Christmas-tree and the joyful vision of Santa Claus.

Now to make a long story short, a polite note had arrived at Cloan Den asking for the pleasure of Miss W. V.'s company at Bargeddie Mains—about a mile

and a half beyond the "old ancient" Caledonian Forest—where a Christmas-tree was to be despoiled of its fairy fruitage. The Bargeddie boys would drive over for Miss W. V. in the afternoon, and "Uncle Big-John" would perhaps come for the young lady in the evening, unless indeed he would change his mind and allow her to stay all night.

Uncle Big-John, of course, did not change his mind; and about nine o'clock he reached the Mains. It was a sharp moonlight night, and the wide snowy strath sweeping away up to the vast snow-muffled Bens looked like a silvery expanse of fairyland. So far as I can gather it must have been well on the early side of ten when Littlejohn and W. V. (rejoicing in the spoils of the Christmas-tree) bade the Bargeddie people good-night and started homeward—the child warmly muffled, and chattering and laughing hilariously as she trotted along with her hand in his.

It has often since been a subject of wonder that Littlejohn did not notice the change of the weather, or that, having noticed it, he did not return for shelter to the Mains. But we are all too easily wise after the event, and it is to be remembered that the distance from home was little over three miles, and that Littlejohn was a perfect giant of a man.

They could have hardly been more than half a mile from Bargeddie when the snow-storm began. The sparse big flakes thickened, the wind rose bitterly cold, and then, in a fierce smother of darkness, the moonlight was blotted out. For what follows the story depends principally on the recollections of W. V., and in a great measure on one's knowledge of Littlejohn's nature.

The biting cold and the violence of the wind soon exhausted the small traveller. Littlejohn took her

in his arms, and wrapped her in his plaid. For some time they kept to the highroad, but the bitter weather suggested the advisability of taking a crow-line across the Forest

"You're a jolly heavy lumpumpibus, Infanta," Littlejohn said with a laugh; "I think we had better try a short cut for once through the old oaks."

When they got into some slight cover among the younger trees, Littlejohn paused to recover his breath. It was still blowing and snowing heavily.

"Now, W. V., I think it would be as well if you knocked up some of your little green oak-men, for the Lord be good to me if I know where we are."

"*You* must knock," said W. V., "but I don't think you will get any bananas."

W. V. says that Littlejohn did knock and that the bark of the dog showed that the oak-man was not at home!

"I rather thought he would not be, W. V.," said Littlejohn; "they never are at home except only to the little people. We big ones have to take care of ourselves."

"The oak-man said, 'Keep straight on, and you're sure to come out at the other side,'" W. V. reminded him.

"The oak-man spoke words of wisdom, Infanta," said Littlejohn. "Come along, W. V." And he lifted the child again in his arms. "Are you cold, my dearie-girl?"

"No, only my face; but I am so sleepy."

"And so heavy, W. V. I didn't think a little girl *could* be so heavy. Come along, and let us try keeping straight on. The other side must be somewhere."

How long he trudged on with the child in his arms and the bewildering snow beating and clotting on

them both will never be known. W. V., with a spread of his plaid over her face, fell into a fitful slumber, from which she was awakened by a fall and a scramble.

"You poor helpless bairn," he groaned, "have I hurt you?"

W. V. was not hurt; the snow-wreath had been too deep for that.

"Well, you see, W. V., we came a lamentable cropper that time," said Littlejohn. "I think we must rest a little, for I'm fagged out. You see, W. V., there is no grass to whisper, 'This way, this way'; and there are no furry things to say, 'Follow me'; and the oak-men are all asleep; and—and, God forgive me, I don't know what to do!"

"Are you crying, Uncle Big-John?" asked W. V.; for "his voice sounded just like as if he was crying," she exclaimed afterwards.

"Crying! no, my dear; there's no need to kiss the crystal tear away! But, you see, I'm tired, and it's jolly cold and dark; and, as Mother Earth is good to little children——" He paused to see how he should be best able to make her understand. "You remember how that little girl that was lost went to sleep in a hollow of the grass and heard the Mother talking to her? Well, you must just lie snug like that, you see."

"But I'm not lost."

"Of course, you're not lost. Only you must lie snug and sleep till it stops snowing, and I'll sit beside you."

Littlejohn took off his plaid and his thick tweed jacket. He wrapped the child in the latter, and half covered her with snow. With the plaid, propped up with his stick, he made a sort of tent to shelter her from the driving flakes. He then lay down beside her till she fell asleep.

"It's only mother, dearie; mother cuddling her little girl; sleep-a-sleep."

Then he must have arisen shuddering in his shirt-sleeves, and have lashed his arms again and again about his body for warmth.

In the hollow in which they were found, the snow-wreath, with the exception of a narrow passage a few feet in width where they had blundered in, was impassably deep on all sides. All round and round the hollow the snow was very much trampled.

Worn out with fatigue and exposure the strong man had at last lain down beside the child. His hand was under his head.

In that desperate circular race against cold and death he must have been struck by his own resemblance to the wild creatures padding round and round in their cages in the Zoo, and what irony he must have felt in the counsel of the wee green oak-man. Well, he had followed the advice, had he not? And, when he awoke, would he not find that he *had come out at the other side?*

Hours afterwards, when at last Littlejohn slowly drifted back to consciousness, he lay staring for a moment or two with a dazed bewildered brain. Then into his eyes there flashed a look of horror, and he struggled to pull himself together. "My God, my God, where is the Infant?" he groaned.

W. V. was hurried into the room, obliviously radiant. With a huge sigh Littlejohn sank back smiling, and held out his hand to her. Whereupon W. V., moving it gently aside, went up close to him and spoke, half in inquiry half in remonstrance, "You're *not* going to be died, are you?"

HER BED-TIME

HER BED-TIME

In these winter evenings, thanks to the Great Northern, and to Hesperus who brings all things home, I reach my doorstep about half an hour before W. V.'s bed-time. A sturdy, rosy, flaxen-haired little body opens to my well-known knock, takes a kiss on the tip of her nose, seizes my umbrella, and makes a great show of assisting me with my heavy overcoat. She leads me into the dining-room, gets my slippers, runs my bootlaces into Gordian knots in her impetuous zeal, and announces that *she* has "set" the tea. At table she slips furtively on to my knee, and we are both happy till a severe voice, "Now, father!" reminds us of the reign of law in general, and of that law in particular which enacts that it is shocking in little girls to want everything they see, and most reprehensible in elderly people (I elderly!) to encourage them.

We are glad to escape to the armchair, where, after I have lit my pipe and W. V. has blown the elf of flame back to fairyland, we conspire—not overtly indeed, but each in his deep mind—how we shall baffle domestic tyranny and evade, if but for a few brief minutes of recorded time, the cubicular moment and the inevitable hand of the bath-maiden.

The critical instant occurs about half-way through my first pipe, and W. V.'s devices for respite or escape are at once innumerable and transparently ingenious. I admit my connivance without a blush, though I may perchance weakly observe: "One sees so little

of her, mother;" for how delightful it is when she sings or recites—and no one would be so rude as to interrupt a song or recitation—to watch the little hands waving in "the air so blue," the little fingers flickering above her head in imitation of the sparks at the forge, the little arms nursing an imaginary weeping dolly, the blue eyes lit up with excitement as they gaze abroad from the cherry-tree into the "foreign lands" beyond the garden wall.

She has much to tell me about the day's doings. Yes, she *has* been clay-modelling. I have seen some of her marvellous baskets of fruit and birds' nests and ivy leaves; but to-day she has been doing what dear old Mother Nature did in one of her happy moods some millenniums ago—making a sea with an island in it; and around the sea mountains, one a volcano with a crater blazing with red crayon; and a river with a bridge across it; quite a boldly conceived and hospitable fragment of a new planet. Of course Miss Jessie helped her, but she would soon be able, all by herself, to create a new world in which there should be ever-blossoming spring and a golden age and fairies to make the impossible commonplace. W. V. does not put it in that way, but those, I fancy, would be the characteristics of a universe of her happy and innocent contriving.

In her early art days W. V. was distinctly Darwinian. Which was the cow, and which the house, and which the lady, was always a nice question. One could differentiate with the aid of a few strokes of natural selection, but essentially they were all of the same protoplasm. Her explanations of her pictures afforded curious instances of the easy magic with which a breath of her little soul made all manner of dry bones live. I reproached her once with wasting

paper which she had covered with a whirling scribble. "Why, father," she exclaimed with surprise, "that's the north wind!" Her latest masterpiece is a drawing of a stone idol; but it is only exhibited on condition that, when you see it, you must "shake with fright."

At a Kindergarten one learns, of course, many things besides clay-modelling, drawing and painting: poetry, for instance, and singing, and natural history; drill and ball-playing and dancing. And am I not curious —this with a glance at the clock which is on the stroke of seven—to hear the new verse of her last French song? Shall she recite "Purr, purr!" or "The Swing"? Or would it not be an agreeable change to have her sing "Up into the Cherry Tree," or "The Busy Blacksmith"?

Any or all of these would be indeed delectable, but parting is the same sweet sorrow at the last as at the first. However, we shall have one song. And after that a recitation by King Alfred! The king is the most diminutive of china dolls dressed in green velvet. She steadies him on the table by one leg, and crouches down out of sight while he goes through his performance. The Fauntleroy hair and violet eyes are the eyes and hair of King Alfred, but the voice is the voice of W. V.

When she has recited and sung I draw her between my knees and begin: "There was once a very naughty little girl, and her name was W. V."

"No, father, a good little girl."

"Well, there was a good little girl, and her name was Gladys."

"No, father, a *good* little girl called W. V."

"Well, a good little girl called W. V.; and she was 'quickly obedient'; and when her father said she

was to go to bed, she said: 'Yes, father,' and she just *flew*, and gave no trouble."

"And did her father come up and kiss her?"

"Why, of course, he did."

A few minutes later she is kneeling on the bed with her head nestled in my breast, repeating her evening prayer:

> "Dear Father, whom I cannot see,
> Smile down from heaven on little me.
>
> Let angels through the darkness spread
> Their holy wings about my bed.
>
> And keep me safe, because I am
> The heavenly Shepherd's little lamb.
>
> Dear God our Father, watch and keep
> Father and mother while they sleep;

"and bless Dennis, and Ronnie, and Uncle John, and Auntie Bonnie, and Phyllis (did Phyllis use to squint when she was a baby? Poor Phyllis!); and Madame, and Lucille (she is only a tiny little child; a quarter past three years or something like that); and Ivo and Wilfrid (he has bronchitis very badly; he can't come out this winter; aren't you sorry for him? Really a dear little boy)."

"Any one else?"

"Auntie Edie and Grandma. (*He* will have plenty to do, won't He?)"

"And 'Teach me'"—I suggest.

> "Teach me to do what I am told,
> And help me to be good as gold."

And a whisper comes from the pillow as I tuck in the eider-down:

"Now He will be wondering whether I *am* going to be a good girl."

HER VIOLETS

HER VIOLETS

"SHALL we go into the Forest and get some violets?" W. V. asks gleefully, as she muffles herself in what she calls her bear-skin. "And can't we take the Man with us, father?"

It is a clear forenoon in mid January; crisp with frost, but bright, and there is not a ripple in the sweet air. On the morning side of things the sun has blackened roofs and footpaths and hedges, but the rest of the world looks delightfully hoar and winterly.

Now when trunks and branches are clotted white to windward, the Forest, as every one knows, is quite an exceptional place for violets. Of course, you go far and far away—through the glades and dingles of the Oak-men, and past the Webs of the Iron Spider, and beyond the Water of Heart's-ease, till you are on the verge of the Blue Distances. There all the roads come to an end, and that is the real beginning of the ancient wilderness of wood, which, W. V. tells me, covered nearly the whole of England in the days before the "old Romans" came. From what she has read in history, it appears that in the rocky regions of the wold there are still plenty of bears and fierce wolves and wild stags; and that the beavers still build weirs and log-houses across the streams. Well, when you have gone far enough, you will see a fire blazing in the snow on the high rocky part of the Forest, and around it twelve strange men sitting on huge boulders, telling stories of old times.

"And if January would let April change places with him," W. V. explains, "you would see *jumbos* of

violets just leaping up through the snow in a minute. And I think he would, if we said we wanted them for the Man."

You see, the Man, who has been only three months with us and has had very little to say to any one since he came, is still almost a stranger, and W. V. treats him accordingly with much deference and consideration. The bleak foggy weather had set in when he arrived, and it has grown sharper and more trying ever since; and as he came direct from a climate of perpetual sunshine and everlasting blossom, there is always danger of his catching cold. He keeps a good deal to his own room, never goes abroad when the wind is in the east or north, and has not yet set foot in the Forest. This January day, however, is so bright and safe that we think we may lure him away; and in all the divine region of fresh air, what place is sunnier and more sheltered than the Forest? And then there is the hint of violets!

So off to the woods we go, and with us the Man, warm and snug, and companionable enough in his peculiar silent way.

It is pleasant to notice the first catkins, and to get to white sunlit spots where the snow shows that no one has preceded us. And what a delightful surprise it is to catch sight of the footprints of the wild creatures along the edge of the paths and among the bushes!

"Are the oak-men really asleep, father?" asks W. V. "Nobody else is."

We stop to examine the trail where Bunny has scuttled past. And here some small creature, a field-mouse perhaps, has waded through the fluffy drift. And do look at the bird-tracks at the foot of the big oaks!

"Oh, father, these go right inside that little hole under the root; is the bird there?"

And others go right round the trunk as though there had been a search for some small crevice of shelter.

As we wander along I think of all the change which has taken place since last I recorded our birthday rambles in the Forest. It is only a year ago, and yet how amazingly W. V. has grown in a twelvemonth! Even to her the Forest is no longer quite the same vague enchanted region it used to be. Strange people have started up out of history and invaded its green solitude; on the outskirts "Ancient Britons," tattooed with blue woad, have made clearings and sown corn, and "old Romans" have run a long straight "street" through one portion of it. There still lingers in her heart a coy belief in little green-clad oak-men, and flower-elves, and subtle sylvan creatures of fancy; indeed, it was only the other day that she asked me, "How *does* the sun keep up in the sky? Is it hanging on a fairy tree?" but I notice a growing impatience at "sham stories," and a preference for what has really happened—"something about the Romans, or the Danes or Saxons, or Jesus." When I begin some wonderful saga, she looks up alertly, "True?"—then settles down to her enjoyment.

The shadowy figures of our old England perplex as much as they delight her imagination. I believe she cherishes a wild hope of finding some day the tiled floor of a Roman villa in a corner of her garden, "like the one in the Cotswolds, you know, father; Miss Jessie saw it." I find a note of the following conversation, just after the last hug had been

given and the gas was being turned down to a peep:

W. V. The Ancient Britons are all dead, are they not?

MOTHER. Oh yes, of course; long ago.

W. V. Then they can't come and attack us now, can they?

MOTHER. No! No one wants to attack us. Besides, we are Britons ourselves, you know.

W. V. [*after a pause*]. I suppose we are the Ancient Britons' little babies. How funny!

And so to sleep, with, it may be, lively dreams springing out of that fearsome legend which Miss Jessie inscribes (in letters of fire) on the black-board as a writing exercise: "England was once the home of the Britons. They were wild and savage."

In spite of her devotion to history and her love of truth, I fear W. V. cannot be counted on for accuracy. What am I to say when, in a rattle-pate mood, she tells me that not only Julius Cæsar but Oliver Cromwell was lost on board the *White Ship*—like needles in a haystack? Her perception of the lapse of time and the remoteness of events is altogether untrustworthy. Last August we went across the Heath to visit the tumulus of Boadicea. As we passed the Ponds the sparkling of the water in the sun lit up her fancy—"Wasn't it like fairies dancing?" After a little silence she was anxious to know whether there was a wreath on Boadicea's grave. Oh no. "Not any leaves either?" No, all the people who knew her had died long ago. There used to be two pine-trees, but they were dead too—only two broken trunks left, which she could see yonder against the sky. A pause, and then, "We might have taken some flowers." Poor queen of old days, hear this,

and smile and take solace! "If she hadn't poisoned herself, would she be alive now?" (Did she poison herself? How one forgets!) Alas, no! she, too, would have been dead long ago. A strange mystery, this of the long, long, long time that has gone by.

When I told her the story of the hound Gelert—"True?"—and described how, after the Prince had discovered that the child was safe, and had turned, full of pity and remorse, to the dying hound, poor Gelert had just strength to lick his hand before falling back dead, the licking of the hand moved her deeply and set her thinking for hours. Next day she wanted to know whether "that Gelert Prince" was still alive. No. Well, the Prince's son? No. *His* son then? No; it was all long, long ago.

It is incomprehensible to her that "every one" should have died so long ago. She does not understand how it happens that even I, venerable as I am, did not know the Druids, or the Saxons, or any of "those old Romans." "You are very old, aren't you, father? — thirty-four?" "I am more than thirty-five, dear!" "That *is* a lot older than me," somewhat dubiously. "Nearly six times." After a long pause: "What was your first little girl's name?" "Violet, dear." "How old would she have been?" "Nearly twenty, dearie." "Did I ever see her, father?" "No, chuck." "Did she ever see me?" N—— Who can tell? Perhaps, perhaps.

All these things appeal strongly to her imagination. What a delight it is to her to hear read for the twentieth time that passage about the giant Atlas in *The Heroes:* "They asked him, and he answered mildly, *pointing to the seaboard with his mighty hand,* 'I can

see the Gorgons lying on an island far away; but this youth can never come near them unless he has the hat of darkness.'" And they touch her feelings more nearly than I should have thought. On many occasions we have heard her crying shortly after being tucked up for the night. Some one always goes to her, for it is horrible to leave a child crying in the dark; and the cause of her distress has always been a mysterious pain, which vanishes at the moment any one sits down beside her. One evening, however, I had been reading her "The Wreck of the Hesperus," and while she was being put to bed she was telling her mother what a sad story it was—and what should she do if she thought of it in her sleep? Here was a possible clue to her troubles. Ten minutes later we heard the sound of sobbing. It was the pain, she said; the mysterious pain; but I was as certain as though I had been herself that it was

> "The salt sea frozen on her breast,
> The salt tears in her eyes."

Yet another evening she begged me to stay a little while with her, as she was sure she could not fall asleep. The best way for a little girl to fall asleep, I told her—and every little girl ought to know it—is to think she is in a garden, and to gather a lot of moss-roses, and to make a chain of them; and then she must glide away over the grass, without touching it, to a stile in the green fields and wait till she hears a pattering of feet; and almost immediately a flock of sheep will pass by, dozens and dozens, and then a flock of lambs, and she must count them every one; and at last a lovely white lamb with a black face will come, and she must throw the rose-chain over its head and trot along beside it till she reaches the

daffodil meadows where the dream-tree grows, and the lamb will lie down under the tree, and she must lie down beside it, and the tree will shake down the softest sleep on them, and there will be no waking till daylight comes. Once more, a few minutes later, there was a sound of weeping in the dark. Oh yes, she *had* counted the sheep and the lambs, every one of them, and had got to the meadows; but one little lamb had stayed behind and had got lost in the mountains, and she could hear it crying for the others.

There is a foolish beatitude in dallying with these childish recollections, but unless I record them now I shall be the poorer till the end of time; they will vanish from memory like the diamond dust of dew which I once saw covering the nasturtium leaves with a magical iridescent bloom. All during the summer months it has been a joy to see the world through her young eyes. She is a little shepherdess of vagrant facts and fancies, and her crook is a note of interrogation. "What *is* a sponge, father?" she asks. And there is a story of the blue sea-water and the strange jelly-like creature enjoying its dim life on the deep rocks, and the diver, let down from his boat by a rope with a heavy stone at the end to sink him. "Poor sponge!" says W. V., touching it gently. As we go along the fields we see a horse lying down and another standing beside it—both of them as motionless as stone. "They think they are having their photographs taken," says W. V. The yellow of a daisy is of course "the yolk." On a windy May morning "it does the trees good being blown about; it is like a little walk for them." When she sees the plane-tree catkins all fluffed over with wool, she thinks they *are* very like little kittens.

Crossing the fields after dusk I tell her that all that white shimmer in the sky is the Milky Way; "Oh, is that why the cows lie out in the grass all night?" After rain I show her how the water streams down the hill and comes away in a succession of little rushes; "It is like a wet wind, isn't it?" she observes. Having modelled an ivy leaf in clay, she wonders whether God would think it pretty good if He saw it; but "it is a pity it isn't green." When the foal springs up from all four hoofs drawn together and goes bounding round in a wild race, "Doesn't he *folâtre*, father?" then in explanation, "that comes in Madame's lesson, *Le poulain folâtre*."

In the woods in June we gathered tiny green oaklets shooting from fallen acorns, and took them home. By and by we shall have oaks of our own, and a swing between them; and if we like we can climb them, for no one will then have any right to shout "Hi! come down, there!" So we planted our prospective woods, and watered them. "They think it is raining," whispered W. V. with a laugh; "they fancy we are all indoors, don't they?" At 7.30 P.M. on the longest day of the year the busiest of bumblebees is diving into bell after bell of the three foxglove spires in the garden. W. V.'s head just reaches the lowest bell on the purple spire. "Little girls don't grow as fast as foxgloves, do they?" She notices that the bells are speckled inside with irregular reddish-brown freckles on a white ground; "Just like a bird's eggs." This is the only plant in the garden which does not outrun its flower; there is always a fresh bell in blossom at the top; however high it goes, it always takes its joy with it. That will be a thing to tell her when she is older; mean-

while—" I *may* have some of the gloves to put on my fingers, mayn't I, father?"

In July the planet was glorified by the arrival of her Irish terrier. She threw us and creation at large the crumbs from her table, but her heart was bound up in her "hound." She named him Tan. "Tan," she explained, "is a better name than Dan. Tan is his colour. Dan is a sleepy sort of voice (sound). If he had been called Dan, perhaps he would have been sleepy." Seeing the holes in my flower-beds and grass-plot, I wish he had. "He thinks it a world of delight to get outside," she remarks; and she is always somewhat rueful when he has to be left at home. On these occasions Tan knows he is not going, and he races round to the yard-door, where he looks out from a hole at the bottom—one bright dark brown eye and a black muzzle visible—with pleading wistfulness, "Can't I go too?" "Look at One-eye-and-a-nose!" cries W. V. "I don't think he likes that name; his proper name is Tan. It wouldn't be a bad idea to make a poem—

'One-eye-and-a-nose looks out at the gate,'

would it, father? Will you make it?" And she laughs remorselessly; but long before we return her thoughts are with the "hound." The puffing of the train is like his panting; its whistle reminds her of his howl. "I expect he will be seeking for me sorrowfully," she tells me, "but when he sees me all his sorrow will be gone. The dear old thing! You'll pat him, father, won't you?" All which contrasts drolly enough with her own occasional intolerance of tenderness. "Oh, mother, don't kiss me so much; too many kisses spoil the girl!" But then, of course, her love for her "hound" is mixed with savagery.

Ever since I taught her the craft of the bow and arrow, Tan (as a wolf) goes in terror for his life. Still, it is worth noting that she continues to kiss the flowers good-night. Do flowers touch her as something more human, something more like herself in colour? At any rate, Tan has not superseded them.

Early in the spring it occurred to me to ascertain the range of her vocabulary. I did not succeed, but I came to the conclusion that a child of six, of average intelligence, may be safely credited with a knowledge of at least 2000 words. A clear practical knowledge, too; for in making up my lists I tried to test how far she had mastered the sense as well as the sound. *Punctual*, she told me, meant "just the time"; *dead*, "when you have left off breathing—and your heart stops beating too," she added as an afterthought; *messenger*, "anybody who goes and fetches things"; then, as a bee flew past, "a bee is a messenger; he leaves parcels of flower-dust on the sticky things that stand up in a flower." "The pistils?" "Oh yes, pistils and stamens; I remember those old words." *Flame*, she explained, is "the power of the match." What did she mean by "power"? "Oh, well, we have a power of talking"; so that flame, I gather, is a match's way of expressing itself. What was a *hero?* "Perseus was one; a very brave man who could kill a Gorgon." "*Brain* is what you think with in your head; and"—physiological afterthought—"the more you think the more crinkles there are." And *sensible?* "The opposite to silly." And *opposite?* "One at the top" (pointing to the table) "and one at the bottom; they would be opposite." *Lady?* "A woman." But a woman is not always a lady. "If she was *kind* I would know she was a lady." *Noble?* "Stately; a great person.

You are the noble of the office, you know, father." "Domino" as an equivalent for "That's done with," has a ring of achievement about it, but "jumbos" in the sense of "lots," "heaps," cannot commend itself even to the worshippers of the immortal elephant. While I linger over these fond trivialities, let me set down one or two of her phrases. "You would laugh me out of my death-bed, mother," she said the other day, when her mother made a remark that greatly tickled her fancy. As the thread twanged while a button was being sewn on her boot, "Auntie, you are making the boot laugh!" "I shall clench my teeth at you, if you won't let me." "Mother, I haven't said my prayers; let me say them on your blessed lap of heaven."

What a little beehive of a brain it is, and what busy hustling swarming thoughts and fancies are filling its cells! I told her that God made the heavens and the earth and all things a long, long while ago. "And isn't He dead?"—like the "old Romans" and the others. "I think God must be very clever to make people. We couldn't make ourselves, could we? Is there really a man in the sky who made us?" "Not a man, a great invisible Being." "A Sorcerer? I suppose we have to give Him a name, so we call Him God." And yet at times she is distinctly orthodox. "Do you really love your father?" "Oh yes, father." "Do you worship him?" "I should think not," with a gracious smile. "Why? What is worship?" "You and mother and I and everybody worships God. He is the greatest King in the world." I was telling her how sternly children were brought up fifty or sixty years ago; how they bowed to their father's empty chair, stood when he entered the room, did not dare speak unless they were spoken to, and

always called him "sir." "Did they never say 'father'? Did they not say it on Sundays for a treat?" A little while later, after profound reflection, she asked—"God is very old; does Jesus call Him Father?" "Yes, dear; He always called Him Father." It was only earthly fathers after all who did not suffer their babes to come to them.

Oh, the good summer days when merely to be alive is a delight. How easily we were amused. One could always float needles on a bowl of water—needles? nay, little hostile fleets of ironclads which we manœuvred with magnets, and which rammed each other and went down in wild anachronism, galley and three-decker, off Salamis or Lepanto. Did you ever play at rainbows? It is refreshing on a tropical day; but you need a conservatory with a flagged floor and the sun shining at your back. Then you syringe the inside of the glass roof, and as the showers fall in fine spray, there is the rainbow laughing on the wet pavement! When it is "too hot for anything," W. V. makes a small fire of dry leaves and dead wood under a tree, and we sit beside it making-believe it is wet and wintry, and glad at heart that we have a dry nook in a cold world.

Still in the last chilly days of autumn, and afterwards, we have our resources. Regiments of infantry and squadrons of rearing chargers make a gay show, with the red and blue and white of their uniforms reflected on the polished oak table. The drummer-boys beat the charge, the buglers blow. The artillery begins; and Highlanders at the doubtle spin right about face, and horsemen topple over in groups, and there is a mighty slaughter and a dire confusion around the man with the big drum—"his Grace's

private drum." Then farewell the plumèd troop and the big wars! We are Vikings now. Here is the atlas and Mercator's projection. W. V. launches her little paper boat with its paper crew, and a snoring breeze carries us through the Doldrums and across the Line, and we double the Cape of Storms and sniff the spices of Taprobane, and—behold the little island where I was born! "That little black spot, father?" "Yes." "Oh, the dear old place!" I am surprised that the old picturesque Mappemonde, with its elephants and camel trains and walled towns and queer-rigged ships, does not interest her. She will enjoy it later.

The day closes in and the curtains are drawn, and I light a solitary candle. As I bring out the globe, she calls laughingly, "Oh, father, you can't carry the world—don't try!" Here we are in the cold of stellar space, with a sun to give us whatever season we want. With her fan she sets a wind blowing over half the planet. She distributes the sunshine in the most capricious fashion. We feel like icy gods in this bleak blue solitude. "I suppose God made the suns to keep Himself warm." "He made you, dear, to keep me warm, and He made all of us to keep Him warm." She will get the meat out of that nut later. "I wonder what will happen when everybody is dead. Will the world go whirling round and round just as it does now?"

In all these amusements one consideration gives her huge joy: "You ought to be doing your work, oughtn't you, father?" Once, when I admitted that I really ought, she volunteered assistance. "Would it help you, father, if I was to make you a poem?" "Indeed it would, dear." "Well, then, I must think." And after due thought, this was the poem she made me:

"Two little birdies sat on a tree, having a talk with each other. In the room sat a little girl reading away at her picture-book. And in the room, as well, there was a boy playing with his horse and cart. Said one little birdie to the other, How nice it would be if you were a girl and I was a boy." (Hands are dropped full length and swept backward, and she bows.)

This was after the Man came.

Oh, the Man! I have been day-dreaming and have forgotten the snowy woods, and the tracks of the wild creatures.

This is the story of the Man.

The Man arrived on the fifth of November. As soon as I reached home in the evening, W. V. had her lantern ready to go out Guy-Fawkesing. "I must go and see mother first, dear;" for mother had not been well. "May I go too, father?" "Certainly, dear."

We found mother looking very delicate and very happy. "We are going out to see the bonfires; we shall not be long. Give mother a kiss, dear." As W. V. approached the pillow, the clothes were gently folded back, and there on mother's arm—oh, the wonder and delight of it!—lay the Man. W. V. gazed, reddened, looked at mother, looked at me, laughed softly, and gave expression to her feelings in a prolonged "Well!"

"You kiss him first, dear, and we'll let the little man get to sleep. He's come a long way, and is very tired."

A darling, a little gem, a dear wee man! She "wanted a boy"! How shockingly ecstatic it all was! For days her thoughts were constantly playing

round him. She even forgot to give Tan his biscuits. "Even when I am an old lady I shall always be six and a half years older than Guy; and when Guy is a little old man he will be six and a half years younger than me." The very fire revealed itself in the guise of motherhood: "It has its arms about its baby." Cross-questioned by deponent: "Why, the log is the baby, father. And the fire has yellowy arms."

This was the chance, I thought, of helping her to realise Bethlehem. "The donkey and the cow would be kind to Guy, wouldn't they? They would let no one touch him." "Was Jesus very tiny and pink, too?" "And was God quite pink and tiny?" When I explained that God was not born, had never been a baby at all—"Oh, poor little boy!"

Out of the ox and the ass and Gelert and Guy she speedily made herself a wonderful drama. Watching her round the corner of my book, I saw the following puppet-play enacted, with some subdued mimetic sounds, but without a spoken word.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

A doll, a cardboard dog, a horse ditto.

SCENE I.—The doll gets a ride on the dog's back; the horse runs whinnying round the meadow.

SCENE II.—The doll asleep; the dog and horse watching. Enter the serpent (a string of beads); crawls stealthily to the doll. The dog barks and bites. The horse jumps on the serpent. The doll wakes. Saved!

To stand and gaze at the Man is bliss; to hold him on her lap for a moment is very heaven. "Tell me

what you saw when you came down," she prayed him; but the Man never blinked an eyelid (babes and alligators share this weird faculty). Mother suggested: "I saw a snow-cloud, so I made haste before the snow came." W. V. "guesses" that when *she* came she saw many lovely things, but unhappily she has forgotten them.

My daughter's admiration of my great gifts has always been exhilarating to me. Time was when I cudgelled the loud wind for clattering her windows, and saw that malignant stones and obdurate wood and iron were condignly chastised for hurting her. No one has such mechanical genius for the mending of her dolls and slain soldiers; no one can tell her such good stories as I; no one make up such funny poems. Now she contrasted her voice with mine —alas! *she* cannot sing Guy to sleep. Well, let us make a new song and try together:

The creatures are all at rest,
The lark in his grassy furrow,
The crow in his faggoty nest,
And Bunny's asleep in his burrow;
But this little boy——
He is no longer his mother's joy,
For he will not, will not, will not, will not, will not go to sleep!

Oh yes, if we sing with gentle patience and a sweet *diminuendo*, he always does go to sleep—in the long run.

I do not think there is anything she would not do for the Man. "Father, you will always be a staunch friend to Guy?" Why, naturally, and so must she;

she must love him, and help him, and guide him, and be good to him all her life, for there is only one Guy and one W. V. in all the world. She has now caught hold of the notion of the little mother, of considerateness, thoughtfulness, helpfulness, self-denial, self-sacrifice.

Yesterday the little Man noticed a bird painted on a plate and put out his hand. "Fly out, little bird, to Guy!" cried W. V. It was a pretty fancy, and I wrote:

IN CHINA

With wings green and black and a daffodil breast,
He flies day and night; without song, without rest;
Through summer, through winter—the cloudy, the clear—
Encircling the sun in the round of the year.

But now that it's April and shiny; oh, now
That nests are a-building, and bloom's on the bough,
Alight, pretty rover, and get you a mate—
Our almond's in blossom—fly *out* of the plate!

But this was not at all successful. There were no almonds in blossom, and it should have been, "Fly out to Guy!"

No almonds in blossom! I know the oaks are "in feathers," as W. V. says, and the Forest is full of snow; yet I feel that the almond is in blossom too.

The Man is sleeping peacefully in his furs, but it is time we were turning for home.

"Then we shan't get any violets this time?" says W. V. with a sly gleam in her eyes.

Oh, little woman, yes; the woods and the world are full of the smell of violets.

IN MEMORY OF W. V.

I had no human fears;
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

WORDSWORTH.

This is He
Of Galilee,
Of Nazareth,
The Christ that conquers Death . . .
Talitha cumi! See
The tumult as of some sweet strife
Strained tremulous up—up—
"Give her to drink!" He saith—
Yea, Lord, behold, a cup!

T. E. BROWN.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice.

TENNYSON.

WINIFRED VIDA

Glasgow, April 26, 1890. *Highgate, April* 15, 1901.

THOUGH to her it is a vain service, I wish to leave a brief memorial of Winifred's little life, and so complete the book which has made her the child of many households besides our own. I undertake the task at the suggestion of one who loved her, though he never looked upon her face; and in writing of her I shall try to think of her, not as I last saw her, but as she was to me for nearly eleven years; as she will ever be in memory; as she *is*; as I shall yet see her, on the first day of the new week, when it is no longer dark, when the stone has been taken away.

When she came home for the Easter holidays, she was looking more healthy and rosy than we had seen her for a long time—full of gaiety and high spirits. She was so much a child of the earth, so completely one with spring flowers and new leaves and sunshine and the glad breath of the west wind, that one felt that while these lasted she could not but be as they were. Indeed, her joyous little soul seemed to give them something of its own immortality and a human nearness which of themselves they had not.

She had a reverence and piety of her own, thought much of the mystery of God and of the person of Christ, made her own quaint forms of worship—as when she added to her evening prayer the familiar petition, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,

be with us all evermore." Yet in her many moods she was never a "heavenly" child. She wanted nothing better than the good earth on which she found herself. She was wonderfully alive to all that was beautiful; but when I once asked her whether she would not like to live in the sunset among the trees and little islands and tiny houses which she imagined (her meaning for "imagine" was, "I seem to see, although I don't quite"), she answered with a decided "No, I should not." And my question, "Why not?" was met with the prompt reply, "Because I am quite happy down here."

Other children, indeed, may have been as happy; none could have been happier. She had at times her childish troubles, but care fell from her easily. Life was so good to her—and so good to us through her. Even at the end, the wind of the Valley was tempered. She suffered little pain, and no shadow of anxiety or misgiving disturbed her heart at any time. None of us thought of death, she least of all. It is a comfort to me to know that in the common sense of the word she did not *die*, but only swooned away through a momentary blank of darkness into the life divine. There was no leave-taking—no word of anguish or dereliction; no time or chance for these, the change was so sudden.

And yet to us now looking back, there was a sort of premonition in a curious phrase of hers on the evening before her death, when, a little light-headed, she said: "Oh, mother, we *shall* miss you if you go to Italy." On the following morning, too, she wandered at intervals, and I found her much troubled for a moment or two. "I don't want to marry the king's son; but you have to, if you find the king's ring." When I assured her that there was really

no compulsion at all, and that she should not marry any one unless she liked, she was greatly relieved, and looked up at me with a smile of perfect trust. That was the last time I saw the light in her living eyes.

Phyllis and Winifred came home on the Tuesday before Easter, and after a very happy holiday, in spite of the east wind and wet, were preparing to return on Monday, April 15th, the day on which she died.

On Saturday, the 6th, she went with Guy and me into the woods; and we talked and laughed over the "old times," before Guy was born, when she and I had adventures with the Oak-men, and went in great dread of bears and of the webs of the Iron Spider; and of later happy days when we used to take out Guy in his mail-cart, and tell stories in our country house while he lay asleep under the shade of the tree which was his town house. That was the last time we three were in the woods together. She was always companionable, but now I found her grown into a kind of equal, without having lost any of her old gaiety and freshness of fancy.

The following Tuesday was beautifully bright and warm, and the children went into the woods in the afternoon, taking bananas, chocolate, and biscuits with them. They tied Phyllis to a tree, as Andromeda exposed to Pristrix the Sea-monster, and ran away and left her. Some boys came along, and offered Phyllis a knife to free herself "from her bonds," but she was not going to cut their skipping-rope; and presently Winifred peered round a tree laughing. She let Bertha release Phyllis, but ran off home herself, for fear they should chain *her* to the rock.

On Wednesday Phyllis, Winifred, and mother went to the British Museum, chiefly to see Cleopatra's mummy and the great tomb of Mausolus, with its huge stone chariot and horses. She was much interested in both of these things, for we had often talked of them, and these old stories had always a particular attraction for her. In the evening she was very anxious to go to church, but as the bells had stopped ringing before she got there, and she did not like to go in late, she came to meet me. I was crossing the road from the station when I heard a voice, "Father!" and Winnie came running towards me. A little later in the evening she complained of pain in the chest, which we thought was probably caused by indigestion; and she lay down and fell asleep.

On Thursday she still had a little pain, but the children amused themselves with type-writing, and were very merry. After tea it was so bright that they took a run with their bicycles, but Winifred did not stay out long.

On Friday she did not care to go to the Hippodrome. As the pain had shifted somewhat lower and suggested gastric catarrh, the doctor was sent for; but she did not appear to be at all ill. Indeed, all day she was very lively, reading and playing with Guy, and working at some patchwork for a lucky-bag. The needle remains in it just as she left it. At night when Phyllis went to bed, Winifred sat up and said: "I feel better now; let's have a game!" but soon afterwards, hearing footsteps on the stairs, they dived under the bedclothes, and went to sleep.

About one o'clock in the morning she awoke her mother, and complained of the pain being worse. Hot fomentations and poultices were applied; the

doctor came early, and he diagnosed local peritonitis, with a temperature of 103. The word "peritonitis" did not then mean for us what it has come to mean since; we saw no cause for dread. There was pain, it is true, but it was not acute except when she tried to move, and with a little care, we thought, all would be well immediately. Late in the evening her temperature had risen to 105; but although she suffered from thirst and restlessness during the night, it had fallen to 102 in the morning, and it did not rise again.

I take what follows from her mother's account in our House-book:—

She wandered a good deal all day, which we attributed partly to the morphia she was taking, and she kept asking what day it was. When I said it was still Sunday, she laughed at herself quite in her old way, "I *am* a donkey!" The doctor thought her certainly no worse when he came in the evening. She had a very restless night and talked a great deal. Nurse called me at four in the morning, and said she had just been very sick. After poulticing again, nurse went away for an hour, and I lay down beside Winifred, and held her hand and fanned her. She slept a little until six; then I poulticed her again, and nurse got up. Winifred looked very dark round the eyes, and her face was thin, but I never anticipated any danger. She was sick several times again; I think she counted the number, poor child. I helped nurse to wash and change her, and Will came up and helped too. We moved her to the other side of the bed, and she said she was so comfortable. She seemed to move more easily, and I thought she was a little better, but I could see she would need a great

deal of care and nursing. She brightened up when I said they should not go back to school, but that, when she got better, we should all go away to the seaside together.

She talked quite rationally about some things, though she wandered at times. Once she said, "Shall I have to marry the king's eldest son? You know you must, if you find the king's signet-ring." I told Will, and he said, "Oh, you needn't, if you don't want to," which seemed to reassure her. She begged for ice, and Phyllis went and got some, and brought her some flowers, too, which she looked at. She complained of pain at the top of her head, and we kept putting on eau-de-cologne and ice and wet handkerchiefs. She threw the bedclothes off a good deal, and her hands felt cold.

The doctor came soon after 10.30. He found her temperature no higher and her body less tender, but her pulse was bad, and he said she was very low, and proposed to send for advice. She began to speak indistinctly too, and yet I never thought of immediate danger. The doctor said he would come back about one. I sent a telegram to Will at once to say that a physician was coming, but almost immediately she began to change. Nurse felt her hands and found them cold and wet; "Oh, she is going!" she said. We gave her brandy, but her teeth were clenched and we could not get her to take it. I sent another message to Will; and nurse seeing the doctor's coachman, sent for him to come back at once.

I stood by her trying to realise that she was leaving me. Her eyes were wide open, all pupil, but quite unseeing. I kissed her, and spoke to her, but she never replied, and she just breathed a few times, and it was all over. The doctor came in a few minutes

afterwards. I think it must have been about 11.45; but I was too stunned to think of looking at the time. I went downstairs and told Phyllis, and waited for Will to come home. I was so cold.

So ends the story of the little life which to us was so dear.

Before I could reach home she had been dead for nearly two hours, yet her head and bosom were so strangely warm that it was impossible to surrender hope. It was not till late in the evening that the cold of the grave set in, and one knew for certain that her bright spirit had gone.

During the days that followed we kept the shadow from falling on Guy as much as we were able. He played and built and ran his trains as usual, and wound tunes out of his musical box; only, now and then he would ask: "Will it disturb Winnie? Won't she hear?" And when he got for answer, "No, dear, but she would like it if she did," he would say: "It isn't too loud," and would go on very softly with his winding. Poor little man, no trouble, I think, fell to his share on her account.

But for us when she died all the clocks of the world seemed to stop, and all the wheels of life to fall still. It was strange to think how much we had to tell you, how many things we wanted to ask you, Winifred. Every trifle of hers became in a peculiar way precious —and so many things of ours became valueless. Books and pictures which I had kept for her when she should have grown older, what was the use or worth of them now that her hands should never touch them, her eyes never take pleasure in them? The natural impulse was to lay them beside her; she alone seemed to have any right to them. How clearly one under-

stood the sorrow of old days, when all sorts of treasures were laid in the dust with the dead. I used to suppose that this was done solely, or at least chiefly, with a thought of an after-life; now I knew that there was an earlier thought and a deeper emotion at work in the heart of the ancient people; they felt that the fitting place for these things was the grave.

One of Winifred's last visits was to an old clergyman who was ill and was not expected to recover, so very old was he. When he heard she was dead he tried to come and look for the last time on her innocent face, but he found he had not strength enough to get so far.

From almost as many strangers as friends came letters of sorrow and sympathy, and it chastened the selfishness of grief to learn that of those who felt for us most deeply, several had had losses as grievous and nearly as recent as our own, and had suffered in silence, and at least without our knowledge and sympathy.

We laid her to rest in Highgate Cemetery on the 18th. Her little schoolfellows in Kent sent flowers, among them violets from her own garden; and on the Sunday they sang in church the Resurrection Morning hymn. Her old companions at the Kindergarten in Highgate also sent a wreath. In a small village in Norfolk, school-children she did not know searched the woods and fields for wild flowers for her grave; and other children, of whom she had only heard, sent moss and anemones from the shores of Coniston Lake.

At the funeral not only did the sun shine on the coffin, but in the grave itself there was light. All during the service, which was conducted by her

friend, Dr. R—— N——, a robin, I am told, sat close to the grave; she would have liked that. When I went up next day the bees were busy among her flowers, and that too would have been to her liking.

From our House-book I take this portrait of her, drawn more truthfully than I could have drawn it:—

She was very fair; her skin fine and clear and white; her hair fair and silky, and so fine that it did not appear abundant, though it really felt quite thick in the hand; her eyes large and blue—beautiful eyes, not so deep-set as Guy's, with long dark lashes; light eyebrows, and pretty nose, rather long; her mouth was not *quite* so pretty as it was when she was younger, her second teeth came imperfectly enamelled, a sign of delicacy, I sometimes think now, but there was no other symptom that struck one in that way.

Her body was strong, broad-built; she had fine straight limbs, square-set feet, and extremely pretty hands and nails—("moons," she used to call the white at the root of the nails: "Does God like us to show our moons?")—I used to delight over her hands; she used them so gracefully too. Her flesh was firm and elastic to the touch, and she gave one the impression of having a good deal of muscular power. But she flagged easily; much walking or sustained exertion quickly tired her, and though when she was well she looked well, a very little illness made her look pale and wan.

To most people she was the embodiment of gaiety and high spirits, but to those who knew her well her pensive and sometimes melancholy moods were equally familiar. Wherever she went she made friends; she seemed to know every one's name, and

both in Highgate and at L—d everybody knew and had a greeting for Winifred.

And now her playthings are laid away, within sight and reach, but unused. No one touches the clubs with which she set out on her adventures. The vine has caught her hoop and twined it with tendrils and green leaves.

The rose-bush in the garden is breaking into flower at last. Blossom, slow bush, lift up hands of flowers, as she would say; the last time she was near you she blamed your long delay. In the woods, now that she can walk no more in the familiar footsteps, the ways are glad with the colour of spring. How she loved it! Here are the trees where there used to be pools after rain, and in her later years she would look into them and laugh at her old fancies that there were water-fairies that lived down in those clear leafy depths. To-day all the pools are dried up, there has been no rain since she died. To me she was such a pool of fairy water—a ten-years' fountain of joy for ever springing. How well N—— prayed:—"We praise Thee for the years of good Thou hast given us!" How wise and helpful was his whole prayer—one unvarying and ungrudging hymn of praise and thanks for all, alike for the good and for that which does not seem good.

"We praise Thee!"

And yet for all that, how well I understand the misery of Othello's cry, "Othello's occupation's gone!" Constantly I find myself referring things to her—"This will do for Winifred; I must ask Winifred about that; Winifred must read this"—and as constantly I am thrust back upon myself.

"We praise Thee!"

Yet all the purpose, the brave plans, the high spirits, the zest of life have vanished. If I set myself to my tasks anew, it will be with the thought, "I shall go softly all my years."

Still, feeling this, knowing this, "We praise Thee!"

A week later, on what would have been her birthday, we went to Albury where all the woods and lanes are alive with her presence.

I knew that I should see her standing beside her bicycle in the shadow of the great beeches in the Warren; that I should see her waving her hand to me as she coasted down one of the broad drives along the Heath; that in one of the deep sandy lanes which lead to the Hurtwood, where they played bare-footed, with rods of foxglove, at being Whortleberry Pilgrims, I should espy her resting in one of the "wayside chapels," formed half-way up the bank by the woven roots of the trees. Highgate she has left for ever; but in this still region of childish play and happy memories her joyous spirit, I felt, would linger with a lingering love of the sweet earth; and—who could say that it might not pass into a sudden visibility?—even as a little bright cloud startles the aeronaut by appearing suddenly at his side out of the clear air, and as suddenly departing into its unseen home.

And indeed, in the evening, I felt her presence with a deep sense of nearness. The sun had gone down, but the air was still clear, and the lark was still singing in the higher light; the thrushes, too, in bush and tree.

On the top of the Heath, in its little garden, the small white post-office stood out against the sombre green pines and beeches of the Warren, and around the post-office the garden looked like the garden of a

vision, for a slender birch stood very tall and silvery, with light branches which seemed to float on the dim air, and behind there was a cloud of greenish-white plum-blossom, the two trees appearing as one.

All the garden was full of this dreamy bloom; and at one corner a faint smoke, with a tinge of rose in it, floated high above the blossom of plum and damson—this was the flower of the wild-cherry.

Far away, on the ridge of the downs, the little cruciform chapel of St. Martha stood cold and grey in a reach of cold clear sky.

The twilight deepened, the half-moon high overhead grew bright, the garden on the Heath became more dreamily angelic. How easy it seemed to believe that if we waited a little we should see once more her light figure, in its well-known pink and dark blue, wheel past us with her nod and smile. Oh, Winifred, one last living look! Oh, child, one rose from your Paradise!

RECOLLECTIONS OF HER SCHOOLDAYS

RECOLLECTIONS OF HER SCHOOLDAYS

THE following recollections of Winifred were written a few weeks after her death by her cousin Phyllis. They cover the three months they were at school together at L—d, in 1901:—

A week or two before we left L—d, Winifred and I dressed up and acted our Shakespearian play. The audience was composed of Uncle Frank, Aunt Hetty, and the maid, Minnie.

After the play, which went very well, we had some tableaux; they *were* good. Winifred was "The First-born" and "The Little Match-seller." At least, Mingie [1] was the mother of the First-born; the First-born was my dolly. I was "The Sleeping Beauty" and "What's o'clock?" After the tableaux we sang, and the audience was immensely pleased. When we had finished, and were retiring (after we had come before the curtain, which was a screen), Uncle Frank asked if we weren't going to have a collection. So we said we would. And got three-pence.

Our costumes for this great occasion were as follows:—

For *As You Like It*, Winifred wore a flowing white robe composed of one of Auntie's best night-

[1] Mingie and W. V. were only nicknames for Winifred (as Guy could not say Winnie he used to say Mingie); it means the same girl all along.

gowns: also a lovely variegated girdle, made of strips of the best paper, licked at the ends—the hue came off on to our tongues, and stuck together. She also wore all the articles of jewellery she could find, and her party slippers. She had her hair put into a loose graceful knot, and braided becomingly. I was very much the same.

One night Auntie Hetty said we were not to talk after we got into bed. So, as we are *very* obedient children, we sat, after the light was put out, outside on the very edge of the bed, and talked for quite a long time. And Auntie could not scold us, for we had obeyed orders so well.

Every Sunday Winifred takes a class in Sunday-school. At least Miss N. is supposed to take it, but Winifred keeps order for her. When she calls the register, some of the boys say, "Yes, ma'am," and others say, "Yes, 'm." But sometimes they answer, "Present, teacher," which pleases her immensely.

Sometimes we play at "Scouting" in the sand-hole during the dinner-hour. We played it like this. First Mingie would go round one side of a hill, and I round the other; we would both have our clubs and our top-boots, "to make us look more like men," said Winifred. (They are American boots made of rubber, and reaching to the knee; W. V. called them "seven-leaguers.") Then when we met at the foot of the hill, we would wrestle and the one that could overthrow the other first was pronounced victor. Then we would do it all over again. Somehow Winifred always seemed to get me down first.

One night I was having my bath before the fire, and Winifred was waiting for her turn, when she suddenly said, "Let us play at Nymphs!" So I was a Nymph in the sitz-bath, and W. V., garbed in

nothing but two small towels, was "A Man," as she said. The Nymph had to try to hide in the water, but I am unfortunately too large, and when my body was hidden, my legs dangled over into the fender; so it was a failure. But the Man laughed so that his towel fell off, and had to be readjusted. By this time, however, Auntie bustled the Nymph out of the Silent Lake, and proceeded to wash the Man, at which daring proceeding he was very indignant.

We two always slept together, and one night when we were unusually wakeful, we decided to make an alteration in our sleeping quarters. So, after much tugging and hauling, we managed to make the bed so that one of us should sleep at the foot and one at the head, and Auntie was vastly surprised when she could find only one of us at the head instead of two. We did it all in the dark, too.

Another night, when we were restless, instead of putting out the light, like good children, I climbed (in my nighty) on to the chest of drawers, and was "Juliet," while W. V. was "Romeo," and serenaded me; and as it was cold, she stood on the hot-water bottle. All would have gone well if I had not fallen off the chest, taking the candlestick with me, and plunging the room into darkness as well as making a great clatter. Up came Auntie, and we went to bed in disgrace; but we had enjoyed it very much all the same.

Very nearly every evening Winifred and I skip in the playground. We fasten one end of the rope (the clothes-line) to the wall, and we take it in turns to turn the other end, while one of us skips till she is "out." We skip "Baker, baker"; this is it. The one who is skipping gets a big stone and runs in to the rope, and skips while a rhyme is said. When the

rhyme comes to an end, some one says, "One, two three," and at "three," the skipper, still skipping, drops the stone. Then the rhyme, a little altered, is again said, and when "One, two, three" again comes, the skipper picks up the stone and goes on skipping. It is not at all easy to do, but both W. V. and I can do it. We have a great many more skipping games, but this is both the most difficult and the nicest.

Uncle Will sent us each a book. W.'s was *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, and mine was *The Comedy of Errors*. We were so pleased with them, and Uncle Frank spent the whole afternoon in reading them.

Every day we refresh our minds with a walk on the roof. If it is a fine day we stay out for quite a long while (if we have time), and hide there. One day, when I unsuspectingly walked out there, I heard a little click, and I looked round and saw that naughty Winifred had cut off my only exit, by latching the bedroom window. In vain I shouted to her that the school-bell was ringing, and that she *must* let me in to get tidy; she only smiled, and brushed her hair; and not till the second bell was ringing did she let me in. I often tried to fasten *her* out; but no, she was too careful for that, and I never managed it.

Every Friday evening we have a grand clearing out of our bedroom. We take every ornament down, dust it and the place where it has been, and put it back again. We do all the room like this.

We like early Saturday morning better than any of the other mornings. That was because we were somehow allowed to stay in bed until 7.30, or past. We used to take the bedclothes and tie them to the four posts, and so make, by letting the sides hang right down for walls, a house with a roof. We then

would put all the pillows inside, and after that get in ourselves, and lie there until it became too hot; but generally before it had time to do so we were called to get up.

One afternoon we had a half-holiday, and we were taken to West M—g to do some shopping. I bought a little piano, some animals (imitation ones), and some chocolate. Winifred bought a dough-nut and some sweets, and I forget what else; but I know we were laden when we started to go home. Charlie went with us, and we had to help Auntie to get the mail-cart over the stiles.

Daddy wrote a tragic song, in which this verse occurred:—

"God's mercy," cried the stricken knight,
And flung his sword far in the fight;
The din of battle swept away,
And on the trampled field he lay.

W. V. made a new version; it ran like this:—

"Oh, lummie!" cried the startled Kay,
And flung her twin-brooch in the fray;
The din of Phillipses rose around,
And the twin-brooch lay on the trampled ground.

Kay was my cousin Kathleen, and she was very fond of wearing twin-brooches, two brooches fastened together.

On my thirteenth birthday morning Winifred and I woke up unusually early; and when we heard the postman at the door we left our bed-making and raced downstairs. There were a great many parcels, eight in all, but that was only by the first post. We sat down on the floor and opened them all. All the presents were *lovely*; but Winifred was most taken

with the watch. In the afternoon Auntie Hetty took Mingie to M—e, and Winifred bought me a watch-stand, and Auntie a photo-frame. I had a birthday-cake for tea. We used to count up the days until it should be her birthday, but it seemed a very long time to us to wait, for it was practically two months.

Winifred had some very remarkable expressions, and about the funniest was one that she always used if I tickled her. It is hard to spell, and I think it is Scotch. It was "Dinna do't!" She pronounced it "Dinna doot"; and I may remark that it meant "Do not do it." Two of her favourite words were "wildly" and "slightly." If Uncle Frank was very angry, Winifred would say he was "slightly vexed"; or if he, or any one, came into the house slowly, she would say he was "coming wildly in." So that if Uncle was angry with her for doing something too slowly, she would say, "Uncle was slightly vexed when he saw me wildly doing so and so." If you reversed it you got it right, but not unless. She used to come heavily downstairs, and thump about, which made Auntie Hetty vexed with her, for she said, "I don't want people to think that we have got a great heavy man in the house!" But Winifred used to quite forget all that, and come down just as noisily as before; and when again rebuked, she would say, with a look of mild surprise, "Why, Auntie darling, I was only thundering lightly down!"

The day that Winifred's mother and my father came to L—d for the concert, we were "wildly excited." We had a half-holiday in the afternoon, and I went with Aunt Hetty in the cab to meet them. While we were away, Winifred helped to put the stage up, in readiness for the concert at night. Auntie

Annie brought Winifred a beautiful bunch of daffodils, and they were put on the stage, to make it look nice. When we went into the concert we got front seats. Auntie Annie and Auntie Hetty played pianoforte duets, and Daddy sang. We enjoyed it very much.

The few days they spent with us were very fine, but alas! they went all too quickly. and before we knew it, Daddy and Auntie were on their way back to London. When Winifred and I were driving to the station with them at night, Winifred, looking up at the stars, said, "I don't know why people call those stars the Great Bear; they are no more like a bear than I am." I said, "Not so much!" And I *did* catch it when I was in bed. When they had gone the place felt *horrid* without them, and Winifred wept copiously (in bed), and I tried to comfort her, although I felt bad myself.

A few weeks before Aunt Hetty's birthday, Mingie and I heard her saying that she wanted a new tea-cosy; so we saved up manfully. Between us we got 3*s*., all out of our pocket-money, and sent it to Manchester, and on the birthday there arrived a lovely tea-cosy. Auntie *was* pleased.

Just before we came home we went to M—e, to buy Easter eggs. Winifred and I each bought for everybody we wanted to, and then went and had some tea. After that Auntie did a lot of shopping; and when it was finished we discovered that we should have to wait an hour and a quarter for our train. It was pouring with rain, and all the shops were shutting up, as it was their closing afternoon. So we went home at last in the carrier's cart; and that was the best fun of all. We bought a nest with three eggs in it for Uncle Frank and Aunt Hetty. I gave little Charlie a basket-pipe with an egg in it.

I forget what Mingie gave him—oh, I remember, it was an egg with a pearl necklace in it. The egg was made of green wood.

[In connection with this ride in the carrier's cart, so briefly mentioned, we learned afterwards that the carrier was very much affected by the news of Winifred's death. The children had sat beside him as he drove, and they were much amused because he told them that no one had ever done so before but his "young lady." He had been only recently married, and he spoke a great deal about her to them.]

One day when Winifred and I had been having a slight "difference" over something, she said with a sigh, "My child, you are paving my way to an early grave," and that made us laugh, so that the difference was entirely forgotten. She often used to try to look pensive, and say either "My little child, you are turning my golden locks white," or "Oh, child, child, when you are my age you will know better!" And when she had spoken we both used to laugh, so that Winifred could not look pensive any longer.

Her favourite game at night was describing dresses. Every, or nearly every, night I had to describe my wedding dress, my going-away dress, and my baby's dress, *at least;* then she would do the same. And if I dared to be sleepy, she would just kick all the things off poor me, and hold them off till I would "describe." I had no way of avenging myself, for she used to hold the clothes very tightly so that they would not come off. But one night I took a wet sponge into bed, and had my revenge!

I had a calendar given to me, and every morning I used to cross off a day, as one nearer to going home. There was always great excitement when we came to the end of a row.

She was very fond of getting flowers and making them into wreaths, and putting them on the graves in the churchyard opposite. I have known her decorate as many as five graves at once in this manner.

One or two of the schoolboys sometimes touched their caps to her, and then she *was* delighted. She would sail past them with a dignified air that was very imposing, but as soon as she was out of sight, she forgot her dignity, and burst out laughing.

Winifred was very fond of Geometry, and she always brightened up considerably when that lesson-day came. She was very good at it, and generally got ten-tenths. Indeed, she never went below eight-tenths.

There was a tumble-down kind of outhouse not *very* far from us, that was called "The Black Lodge," because robbers were supposed to hide there, and to jump out at people after dark. But though we often passed it at dusk, no one came and tried to kill us. Winifred *did* want to take her clubs and seven-leaguers and further disguise, and "lurk" there to spring out at unsuspecting village folk, get their wealth, and "fly." Of course, she agreed to share the "booty" with me, who was to stay at home so as to draw her up through the window with a rope. But she never got the chance to do it!

One morning I woke up very early, and as it was fine, I woke Winifred, and we put on our clothes, all but our frocks, with our jackets and caps. We then crept out in our bloomers and reefers as boys. We each got our (or uncle's) gardening tools, and gardened for quite a long time. Aunt Hetty *was* surprised when she could not find us in bed, later on. I was hungry before half-past six, and retired to seek food.

Winifred soon followed my example. But she, unlike me, did not care for dry bread, but had to grope for the butter, and during the proceeding upset the bread-mug, and came so near waking the household that we fled into the wood-lodge; but as nothing happened she came back, found her butter, and was happy.

If ever in the evening, or in any part of the day, I, when I was alone, stayed out too long, Winifred would come to find me, and very stern she was when at length she found me. She would march me home (delivering a lecture as she did so), and give me some kind of punishment when she got me there. The punishment was generally making me do some sums.

One evening, wishing to be very helpful, she went and thoroughly dug up about two feet wide by two and a half feet long of an ugly bit of ground with no plants of any kind on it. She dug it up well, and not till she had done nearly half of it, did she discover that she had "done for" a good part of the onion bed. Uncle Frank was "slightly vexed," and Mingie was sent to her room to write out fifty lines, but by the time she had written about half the number, Uncle told her she need not do any more.

On the evening of Sunday, April 14th (the day before she died), as I was fanning Winifred, she said, "Phyllis, everybody loves my choir-boy, don't they?" By her choir-boy she meant one in the church that she was always gazing at, and talked of, and called "hers."

She has often said to me that she would not like to be very old when she died. She would like to die young; *why*, she never said.

Sunday, May 5th, 1901.—Last night I had the strangest dream that I have ever had. I dreamed

that it was early morning, and we were all in bed. I was awake, and suddenly Winifred came in through the window. Her face looked just as it did when she was well, but she was dressed in white, and she seemed to fly into the room. I know that she spoke to me, but all that I can remember her saying was that she liked being where she was.

When she had been in with me some time, she went to see her mother and her father; when she came out of their rooms she did not say anything more to me except that she would come again, or something like that,—I cannot quite remember; and then she went out of the window again, and when I woke up I felt like crying, for I *did* want to see her properly, and I was *so* disappointed to find out that it was only a dream.

I went to sleep again, and seemed to be shopping in a great crowd, who wanted to take my purse from me; but Winifred came, and took care of both me and my money, and somehow no one could touch me, and they were all making room for us, when Auntie said, " Wake up, Phyl! "

IN THE GOLDEN PRIME

IN THE GOLDEN PRIME

HERE in the autumn woods, while Guy is gathering acorns to plant a forest of his own, I sit and think of her; and somehow my memory goes back to our little story, "Beside a Summer Fire." Like the child of my fancy, she has vanished from the sun, gone far and far into the dusky paths of the long silence. I may call, and listen, and call again, but she never replies—never replies. Soon I too shall go, following you, Winifred, peering wistfully into the shadows, and holding my breath for the sound of your voice. Oh, some day—somewhere—beyond all doubting, we shall meet beside another fire, blithe and unquenchable; and know each other, and remember with gladness, and not without tears, these old happy years of the earth.

Guy always walks with me in the woods; but it is only Guy—it is not She! Yet, dear little soul, what should I do without him?

In places where the tree-trunks are dappled with the low light, he "washes his hands with gold," and on the shining patches of the grass he puts his feet gleefully, for who would not be "The Boy with the Golden Shoes"? I can fancy I see her watching him—see the smile, half amused half motherly, and the silent motion of the humorous eyes with which she would have called my attention to him. How delighted would she have been, had she seen him pointing to the two rough-hewn benches they have

placed beside the fountain: "Look at those bears, pappa; they are growling at each other; their feet are stuck fast in the ground."

In his childish prattle he gives comfort that no one else can give me. . . . "Won't Winnie never come down again?" he asks. "No, dear." "No, we must die into heaven to her; and God will keep us there." If he misses her it is not sorrowfully, but with a quiet assurance: "I *would* like to see her. When I die into heaven I *shall* see her." "Yes, you will." "Yes, I will see her. I shall have plenty of toys to play with there; and flowers to pluck. The flowers never die there; they are always in warm summer air. Where does the cold come from down here?"

Dying into heaven! The old Keltic folk were wont to speak of "dying into the hills." A strange phrase it sounded, but a child's saying shows with what natural intuition they divined the way of our "hence-faring."

How these woods are haunted with the recollections of her!

Here among the hollows of the tumbled ground we gathered bluebells in May—a lovely day, so warm and sweet with the scent of the spring that Winifred said she would tell her children about it, if (with a shrug) she had any. Out in the sunny fields beyond we once heard the crying of sheep, and when at her entreaty we went to look at them, there was no Boy Blue, as she had half expected, but an old rheumatic shepherd, with a face wrinkled and brown as a walnut. Under the trees in June we noticed how on the dappled ground the sunshine always came through the leaves in circles, no matter what the shape of the leaves or of the chinks between them; and in winter she found

that the snow under these trees was spotted with tiny discs and cups of ice.

Dew for her was "fairy rain," and it was a delight to move a little this way and that so the sun might flash on the drops. If you shut your eyes and looked at the sun, you would see "tomato-red" through your eyelids. It was no use to point out that you could not look at the sun with your eyes shut; "you could pretend to look." On a morning in late October she discovered a benumbed butterfly, and held it tenderly till the warmth of her hand restored it, and it fluttered away.

She noted that in November the foliage on the eastern side of trees falls first; just as hoar-frost "blackens" first on the eastern side on a bright winter morning, while it shows so grey on the western side that the trees seem to be smoking. She was always curious in the observation of colour, but keenness for fact did not spoil her fancy. Long after she had lost faith in the Oak-men, she suggested that "perhaps the swifts or martins carried the Oak-men away pick-a-back to the south: nicer than sleeping in the cold trees here all the winter." There was no capriciousness in regard to these things; she was invariably eager to watch and conjecture about them. "The ways of Mother Nature," was her phrase for them. "You don't understand Mother Nature, my dear," she once closed a lecture to Guy, when he got cross because it was raining; "she wants to water her plants and things."

It was pretty to watch these two at their play sometimes. "You nice, sweet huggy Winniline!" he would cry, unpacking his heart, and she would fold his head in her arms: "Oh, you little hero!"

While she was at school he often talked of her, and picked up acorns, pebbles, bits of stick, anything that in his fanciful way he thought she might like to have when she came home: "I love Winnie; she does nice thoughts for me"—not only thinks them, but does them.

I have often been glad that she read the book from which she got her "little hero." It filled her world with such a sense of what was high and generous and gallant, with such dreams of beauty and splendour. Perseus and Danae, Theseus, Jason, Athene, Chiron, the Argonauts—they were all so real to her. And how seriously she took them! "Oh no," she declared when it was a question of playing at the "Heroes," "I wouldn't be Theseus for anything, for after all his great deeds, there is a chapter which says, 'How Theseus fell by his pride.'" It was one of her regrets that she could not go to school to the Centaur: in heaven, perhaps, she might be allowed—"the Centaur would not be in Hades, would he?" I do not know how she acquired some of her theological notions, unless indeed, piecing together the odds and ends of talk which children pick up with such startling alertness, she worked them out for herself in her untiring spirit of inquiry. Having read somewhere about what she called "Top-het," she asked whether "that pit of darkness and fire" were the same as Hades, and remarked: "There must be only very few people in Tophet; only those, I should think, who *won't* be sorry for what they have done."

"We are having quite a theollojun for our son!" she laughed, when Guy hazarded a conjecture as to the divine intention in the making of trees; and it often happens that in children the theologian is twin-born with the poet. But whatever her childish

speculations, she had a deep sense of right and reverence. Ritual appealed strongly to her, and among the last things we talked of together were some forgotten customs of the Ages of Faith. Greatly did it please her to hear of the bells of mediæval cities chiming out the quarters, night and day, with a phrase of prayer — *Ut nobis parcas — Ut nobis indulgeas*—and marking the hour with the close of the petition, *Te rogamus audi nos!* Many a time as we came homewards through the woods at evening we sang together in an undertone a rhyme of ours which had taken her fancy, and which we called—

THE PASSING BELL

When our little day is ended,
When the dusk and dark have blended,
When the lights of time cease gleaming
O'er these tents of earthly dreaming,—
Te rogamus—

Do not in that hour forsake us;
Let not dust and darkness take us;
Send Thy dawn's clear splendour streaming
From the East of our redeeming,
Te rogamus!

But what did we not sing and say and play in the woods? Nonsense rhymes made up on the spur of the moment, poems I had learned when I was of her own age, verses she had picked up at school. There was "Cadet Rousselle," with his three houses, three hats, three coats, three eyes, and his rusty sword, and

Quand trois poules vont aux champs
La première va devant,

and "Sur le pont d'Avignon," and "L'alouette" which was at once both French and English, of a kind:—

L'alouett', l'alouette monte en haut,
The lark runs up the heavenly stair,
Pour prier Dieu qu'il fasse chaud,
To pray God send it warm and fair
For three wee downy laverocklings,
Pour ses trois petits pâtureaux,
Who have not either cloaks or wings,
Qui n'ont ni ailes ni manteaux.

Her memory was remarkably quick and retentive, both for prose and verse, and she was constantly using phrases and allusions which showed how she assimilated what she read. "Hush, the naked bear will get thee!" she whispered in the words of Nokomis, when little Guy was in one of his moments of ululation. "Let us look at Tan; he is in his kennel; that's where he sits and sings his evening hymn." When I referred to a letter of hers as an "epistle," thinking she would not understand, "Oh," she broke in, laughing, "I remember that Epistle of St. Winifred." "Oh, mother, you never let me come into your bed now. You know I would be as quiet and still as a deep lake." "My saucy son," from Norman Gale's "Bartholomew," was one of her names for Guy—

Bartholomew's
My saucy son:
No mother has
A sweeter one!

The Songs for Little People was one of her favourite books, though she found fault with the poet for "leaving words out" of Auntie Nell.

And then we cluster round her knees
To say our prayers,

ought to have been, "To say our morning prayers," and "To make us neat"—to make us "nice and neat."

She seemed to realise everything with a dramatic vivacity. When the *Ancient Mariner* was read to her she flopped down on the rug and lay bent and rigid against the bulwarks (of the couch) to show how the dead men cursed the Mariner with their glassy eyes, and when the albatross fell off and sank like lead into the sea, she uttered a prolonged O-o-h!—"I quite forgot about that whopping bird!" "Write when you get there," I said to nurse, as she was carrying Guy downstairs. "Wouldn't it be funny," cried Winifred, "if nurse wrote a letter for him,

Dear Pappa,
Dot dere,
BABY."

How one lingers over these foolish trifles!—but at the recollection of one of the slightest of these she comes back to me, the bright, nimble-fancied, merry Winifred—and a Winifred still more close and dear. For, as though it were but yesterday, I remember an evening after a day of illness and pain, when it was very heaven to see the western light slanting into the cool depths of the wood, reddening the trunks and flushing the child's face, and darkening to a hot purple in the distant underwood.

And in the clasp of her hand there was healing. Winifred, "Win-peace," "Peace the White." The meaning of names had an unfailing attraction for her; each new one set her questioning and wondering

about the people who first bore them. Guy, "the leader"; William, "the helmet of resolution"; Elizabeth, "the worshipper of God"; Phyllis, "the green bough"; Winifred, "the white peace"—rather the Red Racket, I used to tease her—but how well I knew that she was my Win-peace too!

Her MS. books and school *cahiers* lie in a small pile before me, and I try to piece together some record for myself of the busy working, the dreams and projects, of her restless spirit.

How vividly this black-covered note-book recalls her first desperate struggles with arithmetic! Afterwards she acquired more concentration and perseverance in her attempts to master figures.

Here, too, are her collections of wild flowers—some of the flowers missing from their places, the others faded and shrivelled. They mostly belonged to June '98, and bear their dates; some few were gathered in July '99. Among the former I notice the "srynga," "marsh-mallow," "featherfew," "wild convolyulus" and "hunyckukul," and that remembrancer of old romance, the "Plantagenet."

One page among the flowers shows, in a sketch, the contrast between "stones before being washed by the sea" and "stones after being washed by the sea." As might have been expected, there are drawings, heads and figures, and among these a story begins:—"Once opun a tiome there was a little fay her name was cowslip a very pretty name too." . . . That story was never told.

She revelled in colour, and was constantly painting. Costumes, flowers, and decorative designs gave her most pleasure. Her favourite amusement beyond all others was to dress up as some historic or fairy-story personage. An old programme of some such

performance, dated May 28, 1898, survives, and in a note-book of "Stories and Poems" belonging to the same year, I find what seems to be her first attempt at a play:—

ALFRED THE GREAT

SCENE.—*A moor with Alfred disclosed, as the curten rises, disgised as a pesent.*

ALFRED. To think that I am a king—no one would think it by my looks. Who knows when I shall get my kingdom restored to its proper rights? No doubt I shall never see the throne of England. And my troops, what will become of them? They will have to provide for themselves. I wish I could get something to eat and drink. Ah, I see some smoke coming from that clump of bushes; and the good woman must be preparing dinner for her husband, and I will ask for something to eat.

Curten.

SCENE.—*Alfred with a woman in a room in a cottage.*

WOMAN. Well, I sopose you can have something to eat. There is my husband coming in to his dinner, and you can have some dinner with us. [*They eat.*

MAN. Well, travlar, play for us on your violin, come. [*Alfred plays.*

MAN. Thanks; come to bed now. [*They go to bed.*

Curten.

SCENE.—*The same, with brekfast ready. They eat and talk.*

MAN. I must go to work now. Good-bye.

[*He goes out.*

WOMAN. Will you watch these cakes while I go out.

ALFRED. Yes.

WOMAN. Well, mind they do not get burnt.

ALFRED. Very well. [*She goes out.*

ALFRED. Well, here we are alone again. I wonder where the Danes are—in Denmark or England? I hope the Danes will not get the crown. [*The cakes burn.*

Goodness gracus! the cakes have burnt. I am in hot water. [*The wife comes in.*

WOMAN. You good-for-nothing, all the cakes are burnt. [*The man comes in.*

MAN. King Alfred the Great, the good Saxon.

ALFRED. Yes, I am King Alfred.

WOMAN. Oh, sire, I beg your pardon, for we did not know you.

Curten.

A fragment of another play, "A Fairy Prince," opens with a gorgeous setting, and plunges at once into business.

PRINCESS. I dare say you would, and so would I; but I can't.

PRINCE. Why not?

In the "Two Good People," the Prince, who owns a magic ring, brings the Princess Dotherinapon into his presence by its power, and proceeds to woo her:—"Adorable Princess, will you be my queen? for I have riches in abundance, and I am your equil." To which the Princess replies, "Prince, I would gladly marry you, but I have my father, who is a magician, and who has already given me to a man

I hate." "Beloved Princess," cries the lover, "I can easily rid you of that torment. I have a wishing ring and I can do what I like with it. When you marry me, I will give you the ring as a marriage gift."

And so the effective, if somewhat unexpected, *Curten.*

Much attention is given to the theatrical wardrobe; in many cases the *costumière* has completed her task before the dramatist has been able to start on the text. Page after page is filled with her coloured drawings of ladies' dresses, ladies' coats and skirts, children's hats, evening toilettes, and heads magnificent with feathers, jewels, and other gorgeous accessories.

The last of her dramatic efforts is preceded by the note:—

"1900, April 28. First fern up."

It is entitled—

THE GARDEN OF ROSES

CHARACTERS—*Princes. Princesses* (2). *Fairies* (4). *Witch.*

SCENE.—*A little wood. A little girl is asleep. Circle of fairies swaying backwards and forwards singing.*

FAYS' SONG

Little mortal, hushaby!
While we sing in the woods;
Though the mortals are forgetful
We will guard thee here in peace.

Chorus.

Come to the garden of roses,
Come where the roses grow,
Where we fairies dance for ever
All among the roses.

Enter WITCH.

WITCH. So you have got a princess. Now I will give you each a wish—and I will have one too.

FIRST FAIRY. I give her buty.

SECOND FAIRY. I give her happiness.

THIRD FAIRY. I give her riches.

FOURTH FAIRY. I give her noble marrige.

WITCH. And I give her some sorrow.

Curten.

Following this unfinished play there are openings of two stories, that of "The Sweet Princess," who was shut up in a great grey castle, and that of "Princess Rosa," who was dressed in pearl-grey satin, and wore round her neck "thirteen strings of large pearls, rubies, emeralds, diamonds, christals, sapphiers, and amerthists."

So many beginnings! So many things to do, so many things left undone in her little busy eager life!

I pass over in silence the various things she wrote in ordinary prose, as I cannot be sure how far she was merely reproducing what she had read. There are sketches and tales—"Dorothy," "Tommy," "The Fairy House," "The Magic Wande," "The Rose Maid," "The Spoilt Princess," "The Puff-puff and the Gee-gee," and so on—finished, unfinished,

barely begun, and all distinguished by a cheery indifference to orthography which gives them a certain transatlantic—or shall I say mediæval?—piquancy. Here, however, is a happy ending:—

"But one day the Princess was in her little chapel praying, with her white hands clasped togather, and her golden hair reaching down to the ground, and clad in a dress shinning like the sun. A man came in, and with a cry of joy the Princess rushed into his armes and sobbed opon his sholder. 'My darling,' said the King, 'you must come with me home to my own land.' So they started, and when they arrived the Princess fainted. . . . 'Oh, were am I?' said the Princess; for comeing counches (conscious) again, she was in a pink silk bed and blue curtains, and the King was be side her, holding her hand. 'My treasure,' said the King, 'you are with your dear one.' The Princess fell into his arms, and the King pressed a kiss on her pretty cheek. They were soon marrèd, and ended their days in joy."

Turning to her diaries I find the following, under date February 1, 1899:—

I saw a little rain-drop sitting on a blade of grass,
and I took that little rain-drop and I made him a home.
And that pretty little rain-drop came to be my friend.

To the June of this year belongs a "Book of Laws and Rules," drawn up by Phyllis and herself for the observance of "the Court of Queen Titania" during the holidays, which we spent on the edge of Albury Heath. It is an extremely rigorous code, but the provisions had been framed with much deliberation, and had received the approval of all the estates of the realm — witness their signatures: Count Randolph,

Sir Edmund Greysteel, Prince Ralph, Wildrose Stevenson, Prince Max, Sir George Eliot, and the worthy commoners John Gumtree, Speedwell, Charles Krong (a foreigner?), and Arthur White Gregson.

On the 7th August she records her earliest recollections:—

"The first thing I remember is myself sitting on my father's knee, dressed in a pale blue dress, a white pinafore, and a pale blue sash, and my mother coming down the road, at Glasgow. And I remember a white statue, and father says it was the Venus of Milo, and it stood in the corner of the room."

As she was not more than thirteen months old when we left Glasgow, it is much more likely that this is a recollection of things heard long afterwards than of things actually seen.

"The second thing I remember is—Mother had dressed me to go out, and I went into the garden to wait for her, and there was a railing, and one end of it was tarry, and I got some tar on my fingers and rubbed it down my dress, and mother put some butter on it to take the stain out."

At that time she would be a little over three.

These recollections are followed by what seems to be a Latin exercise—"Agna saltat in prato . . . Canis vexat taurum . . . Cornua demittit taurus," and so on.

In the beginning of 1900 she notes—"I read in December 'Wyemarke and the Sea-fairies,' by Edward H. Coupar. I learnt at school in 1899 'The Rhyme of the King and the Rose,' by Elsie Hill, and 'The Inchcape Rock,' by Robert Southey."

She also knew by heart "The Revenge," by Tennyson, "Oriana," Longfellow's "King Robert of

Sicily" and the "Monk Felix," "Sir Galahad," Kingsley's "Pleasant Isle of Aves," and a number of other pieces in English and French which I cannot at this moment recall. It was no trouble to her to learn; things lodged in her memory of their own accord.

The verses which I now give were written at various times during the year.

POETRY

The robins all have flown away,
The spring is coming bright and gay,
The grass is green, the sky is blue,
And that's why I like spring—Don't you?

THE SEASONS

The winter's gone, the spring is here,
  And budding is the lime,
And up the sunlit old brick wall
  The jessimen doth climb.

The spring is gone, the summer's here,
  The rose is on the wall;
There's marjoram, there's featherfew,
  And silver lilies tall.

The summer's gone, the autumn's here,
  The leaves are red and gold;
And with its clouds and autumn sun
  The year is growing old.

The autumn's gone, the winter's come,
  The close of all the year,
And with the Christmas snow and frost
  The Christmas chimes ring clear.

IN SUMMER

Oh, sunlit sky,
  Oh, happy hours,
I love the wind,
  I adore the flowers.
It is so sweet
  To see them grow,
Like heaven above
  Is earth below.
The leaves are green,
  Blue are the flowers,
Oh, sunlit sky,
  Oh, happy hours!

THE BLACKBIRD

On a merry May morning a blackbird sits
  High up in the tree-top green,
He sings a song so sweet, so clear,
  All over the world he has been.

Hurrah! cries the blackbird, and sings a note,
  Hurrah! pipes the sparrow with feathers grey,
Be glad, ye people of earth so brown,
  This is a gladsome day!

Hurrah! next month comes the swallow white,[1]
  In June the roses sway,
A merrier month is not to be found—
  This is the month of May!

THE SUMMER

The summer is coming,
The birds are all singing,
The winter is over,
And soon comes the clover.

[1] The white swallow is, I suppose, the martin, with its white breast and its white leg and feet feathers.

With lillies and roses
The children make posies,
The breases are soft,
And the birds sing aloft.

Here, too, there are numerous beginnings which have a certain pitifulness about them.

IN INDIA

The babes are sitting on the grass,
The Indians go to their morning Mass;
I wish I were an Indian boy. . . .

The cherry-tree is bare of fruit,
The leaves are off it now. . . .

The sun was sinking in the sky,
I watched the little clouds on high,
And as I watched the moon came out. . . .

When all the land is frozen o'er
With snow so thick and deep,
Jack Frost comes round with an icy touch
While Mother Nature's fast asleep. . . .

During the holidays, which we again spent among the woods and flowery lanes of Albury, Winifred and her cousin edited and "published" a magazine. As Phyllis was the sub-editor, the lion's share of the work fell naturally to her, but I am assured the profits were divided with a scrupulous rectitude by the editor. The opening article by the sub-editor describes some of their amusements:—

"One day we were Princesses, and wrote letters to imaginary Princes, and posted them in a hollow tree, and went day by day to see if there were any answers; but we only found our own yesterday's notes. So we sadly threw them away, and put in the fresh ones."

Winifred mentions another incident:—

"One afternoon Phyllis was in the garden. Suddenly she saw the cat with a little bird in its mouth. She ran forward and called me and the maid, and between us we managed to get the bird away, but it was dead. Phyllis and I then got a little white and silver box, and we dug a little grave in the heather, and we buried the bird with great mourning, and we decorated the grave with white flowers, and sang cheerful songs over it."

Curiously enough she omits to mention that they pretended that the dead bird was the Fairy Queen, and that they proposed to Guy to join them in pricking their fingers and shedding blood on the grave. Guy sturdily refused to abet such paganism, just as he refused to play the troublesome part of Faithful, though he was prepared to eat oranges as a humble pilgrim, worn with long wayfaring.

On the 10th January 1901, Winifred began a diary, which she kept to the end of the term. It is perfunctory, but the entries are regularly made, and here and there they are personal.

January 21.—*Monday.*—I learnt a verse of "Sir Galahad." The Queen is eighty-one now, so she is rather old to recover.

January 22.—*Tuesday.*—The Queen is dead. Long live the King.

THE QUEEN

She is dead, our beloved one,
Our good and great Queen;
She was loved by all nations,
Her life was serene.

W. V. C.

January 23.—*Wednesday.*—I got four sums right this morning.

January 25.—*Friday.*—I had five sums right this morning.

January 28.—*Monday.*—We had Scripture this morning, about Hezekiah. I had two sums right this morning. We had recitation, "The Revenge" (Tennyson).

January 30.—*Wednesday.*—We had a half-holiday to-day because they have been changing classes. Phyl and I made a cake all by ourselves. I had four sums right to-day.

January 31.—*Thursday.*—We had geometry this afternoon. I got ten-tenths and an enormous "Right." We have each bought a white china plate, and we have been each painting little girls on them.

February 9.—*Saturday.*—We have been having an exam. I got 19 and Phyl got 20. We have been pretending to be princesses; I am Betty, Phil is Edith.

February 13.—*Wednesday.*—We had model drawing. I got seven, and Phyl got seven.

February 26.—*Tuesday.*—I got 9 in drawing. It is cold. Uncle Frank is going to get us a French book, if he can; but I hope he can't.

March 8.—*Friday.*—We had a lesson on recurring decimals.

March 16.—*Saturday.*—We helped with cooking this morning. This afternoon I skipped with Phyl and May H——.

March 21.—*Thursday.*—The tide is right up New H—e and flooded the road. I have got chilblains, and am going to retire to bed with goose-grease.

On the following day she was not allowed to get up,

and amused herself by making her will, which cannot now be found.

As a rule there is very little of Winifred in her letters. She was too impatient to say well or to say at any length what she would have spoken with pleasure. Spelling, too, was a great burden to her. On occasion, however, she filled in the details, as in the following:—

September 30, 1900.—Yesterday I went blackberry-picking with Jane P——, Grace and Cecil R——, and Charles (in his pram).

Yesterday a little gipsy baby was buried, and I made a wreath for it. It had such a pretty little coffin, white and silver. My wreath was of Christmas daisies and red leaves. The leaves are lovely just now, crimson.

I rode my bicycle yesterday.

I enclose one of the autam leaves. . . . I must stop, so good-bye from your very unhomesick daughter, Winifred.

[Phyllis has already referred to the pleasure Winifred took in laying flowers on neglected graves. I do not know what thought it was that stirred her to these acts of pity towards the dead, but it was a trait very natural to her. I remember, when long ago we went across the Heath to visit the tumulus of Boadicea, how anxious she was to know whether there was "a wreath on that dead queen's grave." "Not any leaves either?" Then, when she had heard that all who knew her had died long ago, and even the pine-trees that had waved over her had died too, "We might have taken some flowers." She was not much more than six then.]

October 26, 1900.—I am sending a little poem for

a birthday surprise. . . . I could not think of anything but a poem for your birthday, and Auntie suggested that a letter and a poem would be the nicest thing. So I send both. I wish I could see you all, but it will not be long before I do so.

THE BLUE BIRD

A merry Blue Bird sat on a green bough,
Whispering then, and whispering now,
He said to his little blue son, "Beware!
The cruel grey Cat is there—look *there!*"

"Ha! ha!" cried Puss, "there a Blue Bird sits;
He will make an excellent meal for my Kits!"
And down she pounced on the Blue Bird fair,
And the Blue Bird's soul went up through the air.

October 31, 1900.— . . . You promised to give me 3*d.* for a good "pome," and 1*d.* for a "good, bad, or indifferent" one. I will try and send you a nice one to-day, though really I don't know whatever to write about.

February 24, 1901.— . . . I am at last sending you a poem. I am afraid it is not very nice. . . . We have bought another dormouse, and called it Dorcas. It is so pretty. Phyllis encloses a poem. I hope they are worth something. . . . Your loving little girl, WINIFRED.

× × × × × × × × × × by 1000000000000000000.

WINTER

In the flickering warm bright firelight
I sat when all was dark,
And as I looked on the blackness
I saw the thick snow in the park.

I saw the red lights in the village,
I saw the stars shining bright,
I saw the dark fir-trees swinging,
And below all the snow was white.

Her last letter was written on the type-writer (used for the first time) on April 11, four days before her death. In it she says:—"We went to the British Museum yesterday. We saw the mummy of Cleopatra. . . . It was a horrid day here this morning, but it is quite nice now. Perhaps Uncle Charlie is going to take Phyllis and me to the Hippodrome to-morrow. It is aggravating that the holidays are nearly over."

Among her papers there are many little notes written to imaginary persons, chiefly people she had read of in stories. In her Birthday Book, too, she entered not only the names of her friends, but of two characters in the novels of Marion Crawford, whose works she was very fond of, and other imaginary people. In many instances she has evidently been too much in a hurry to wait till the ink dried before closing the book. So like our little whirlwind! Under her name on the fly-leaf she has inscribed, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke vi. 1).

At Albury the sense of her unseen presence was so acute that longing unsatisfied became a torture. Here at Hambledon there is no presence, no companionship; she does not come at all. There it seemed but a question of time as to when she would stand before me, living and unchanged; here in my heart of hearts I know that this will not happen. And yet — in spite of knowledge — as I sit at sundown on the edge of the high pine-wood and look over the

long green levels below me, the lines of "Kilmeny" rise unbidden in my memory, as though they were half a supplication, half a promise:—

> When many a day had come and fled,
> When grief grew calm, and hope was dead,
> Late, late in a gloamin when all was still,
> When the fringe was red on the westlin hill,
> The wood was sere, the moon i' the wane,
> The reek o' the cot hung over the plain,
> Like a little wee cloud in the world its lane,
> When the ingle lowed with an eiry leme,—
> Late, late in the gloamin, Kilmeny came hame.

The red light dies on the hill, cottage windows glimmer far down in the dusk, the air blows cold; but she does not come home. It may be that in our hours of waking we are not fitted for intercourse with those of our love who have passed from this light; but I know that when it sleeps the mind is "bright with eyes." I shall sleep, and in sleep surely it will be given to me to see her, as I saw one taken more rathe in old days of loss. And as sorrow fell from me then, so will it now drop away from me; and I shall be glad that I am alive, and not unhappy, Winifred, that you are dead.

OUR STORIES

WINIFRED'S personality, her doings and sayings, count for so much in the following sketches and stories, that these pages would by their omission be rendered still more imperfect than they are.

BESIDE A SUMMER FIRE

One of our favourite haunts is the old quarry.

Though it is scarcely half a mile from the village it is among the loneliest places in the world. It is one of the greenest too, and one of the stillest, for no sound seems to reach it, except it may be, the song of a lark overhead, or the noise of the shallow brook across which we have to pick our way to enter it.

Nobody can tell me when it was last worked, or why it was abandoned. I suppose some of the older houses were built from its red sandstone; perhaps some of the illegible slabs in the graveyard were hewn out of it. No one can say.

Up in the fields above, a fence runs along the brink to keep the cattle and sheep from falling over. Around it there are rowans, larches, hazels, bushes covered with dog-roses in June; and the grass has grown thick over the litter of chipped stone, and lichens have tinged with curious colours the big blocks which were ready for lifting but were never carted away.

In the face of the perpendicular rock there is a hole which looks like a cavern that might lead into the heart of the hill, but we have never ventured to explore it. It is too uncanny, too menaceful. One of us is too old, one is too young to be so recklessly adventurous.

We are content to gather dead wood and light a

fire beneath one of the larches. We watch the smoke curl up in blue wavering puffs and wreaths, and we sit beside our wild summer hearth, and spread our lunch -- venison from the King's vert, we pretend, which we have brought down at the peril of losing our right hands, so barbarous are the laws of the forest.

How is it that we both take such delight in a handful of fire under a tree in a blazing summer day?

As I lie and listen to my companion's merry chatter I wonder at the curious feeling of contentment, of freedom, of romance which I experience. Then I endeavour to account for it, but I find myself baffled by the prosaic common-sense which I presume must accompany all our grown-up attempts at reasoning. I ask my companion to explain. She, who is so young yet, so much nearer to Nature and the Ancestors, ought to be able to give some intelligible account of the matter. I can see by her smile that she knows, but it becomes manifest that she cannot find words for things so elusive. I do make out, however, that she thinks we ought really always to live like this—under the blue, in the clear sunny air or in the clear shadow of trees. It is nicer than a house, it is the real house; a house is a sort of clay modelling of this larger home—good enough in winter, but a very inferior imitation when it is warm and one has no Kindergarten to attend.

Then fire is a most beautiful creature; "more wonderful really than dog-roses," though they, too, look like a kind of fairy fire. Still it is not solely the beauty of the fire which delights us. It appears rather to be its companionableness. "Lightning is quarrelsome; but fire is friendly," she thinks. I imagine she is right. Through long centuries men

and fire have been housemates, and mates when there was never a house.

Can this be really the clue to the mystery — that for ages and ages, beginning far away back in the houseless nights and skin-clad days of the ancient life, our ancestors have loved the cheerful face of fire; that the antique joyous association of burning wood with the savage woodland was so long a habit that the civilisation of our historic centuries has been unable to obliterate it completely?

I can scarcely resist the conclusion that it is so. I remember the desert islands of my boyhood, and I know it was not merely a wish to put into action the books of adventure I had read which made me a little savage who caked his hair into a spire with clay from the river. At any rate it is no desire to play at pirates and outlaws which thrills me to-day with the dreadful atavistic joy in a tramp's fire and free life under the greenwood tree. No, we are the children of the Ancestors, and their blood in us beats true to the old forest paths and the laws of the wilderness.

As we idle by the dull embers and white ashes my companion asks for a story.

Well, does she know where the Fens are?

Why, yes; and they were drained long ago.

Just so. Well, once upon a time there was a savage hunter who came with his little girl up the river in a canoe hollowed out of a tree, and paddled to a little piece of beach on the edge of the forest; for in those days there were no Fens, but there was a mighty forest of great oaks and firs and alder and birch and willows. And they landed and drew up the canoe, and they gathered sticks and dead leaves and lit a fire, just as we had done.

And the little girl went away in among the trees to look for berries and wild fruit, and the father piled more wood on the fire.

And when the little girl had been away a long while, and the father heard no crackling of dry branches or rustling of bushes, he called to her, but she did not answer. He grew uneasy, and went into the forest to seek her, and kept calling and calling, but she never replied.

So he went deeper and deeper into the wilderness of great oaks and firs, and continued to call her name till the sound of his voice died away.

And the fire beside the canoe smouldered, and then went out, with only half the wood burnt.

And the forest grew older and older and older; and the great trees decayed and fell down with age, one by one, till nearly all the forest was dead; and storms tore up the other trees; and water lodged among the fallen trunks; and reeds and marsh plants matted them together, till great peat bogs covered the country many feet deep.

Then the sea broke in and flowed over the bogs, for the land sank down; and sand and shells and sea-weed were drifted together in thick sheets.

And all this took hundreds and hundreds of years to happen.

And at last when the sand and sea-warp grew high enough, the country became the Fenland, and the Romans, when *they* conquered Britain, made a road-way across it with trunks of trees and a bed of gravel, and that was fifteen hundred years ago.

"True?"

Why, yes.

How did I know?

Because not long ago when people were digging

in the Fens they found the canoe, and the wood piled for the fire and the burnt embers in the middle of it.

And the little girl?

Well, she wandered into the forest and her father went to seek her.

And hundreds and hundreds of years went by.

And they never came back?

Not to the Fenland. But she wandered on and on till she came to an old quarry, and there she lit a fire, and when she had done she turned round, and there was her father sitting beside it.

W. V. laughed incredulously: "Father, you said it was true!"

CHIMNEY FLOWERS

On a wild night three winters ago the wind Euroclydon tore it from the chimney top, and sent it clattering down the slates. It plunged like a Bulwan shell into a huge laurel bush in the garden, and there W. V. and I found it in the morning, unbroken, in a litter of snow and shredded branches.

Neither in shape nor in colour was it a pretty specimen of the potter's craft; but it *had been* clay, and all clay appeals to humanity. As I looked at it, it seemed to deserve a better fate than the dustman's cart, so, to Winifred's great delight, I dug a hole for it in one of the flower-beds that catch a little of the sun, set it on end, and filled it with stones and soil, in which something might be planted.

This is Nature's way; when she lets her volcanic fires smoulder to ashes she lays out the crater in grass and wild flowers. And this appeared to be the proper way of treating this old retainer which had served so staunchly on the ridge of the roof; which had never plagued us with smoke, whatever the wind or the weather.

We were puzzled what to plant till I recollected London Pride, which, I pointed out to Winifred, is a true roof flower. You find it, no doubt, in gardens little above sea level, but in Kerry, in Spain, its natural place is on the roof of the hills. An "ice-plant," the country people call it, I believe; and that too was appropriate to the hollow of the cylinder through which no fire would ever again send its familiar smoke.

Wherefore we planted London Pride in the old chimney-pot, and masked its plainness with ferns.

To-day the feathery fronds hide all but the thick blackened rim; behind it a rose-bush, trained against the dark paling, shows four crimson buds; in the crater itself the space is filled with green rosettes, and a score of stalks send up stars of pink-and-white blossom.

As I pass by in my walk I think of all the comfortable fires that have burned on the hearth beneath it; of the murmur of pleasant talk, of the laughter of children; of the sound of music and singing, of the fragrance of tobacco, that have floated up to it and through it on the current of warm air. In a way it has shared our joy and our sorrow, our merriment and our cares, and it, too, can thrill with "the sense of tears in human things."

I recall especially one March night. The rain from the roof is splashing from the gorged gutters; all are in bed save a restless four-months child—"the Fretful Porcupine," W. V. flippantly calls him—who is asleep in his cradle in a shadow of the room. His little socks are on the fender. About midnight he will awake and cry for food, and I shall take him upstairs. Meanwhile I read and write. Raindrops fall and hiss on the glowing coal.

How long ago it seems!

The other day I saw a blackbird light on the rim of the chimney-pot, and make a dab with his yellow beak among the rosettes. In the old time, on the roof, sparrows used to alight there, possibly for the sake of the warmth; so I am glad the blackbird came.

I wonder, in an absurd way, whether it misses the wreaths of homely smoke. Perhaps it has forgotten

them—it is the nature of clay to forget easily; perhaps it remembers, but is reconciled, feeling dimly (as I do) that flower and leaf are only another and less fleeting form of the old-time smoke and flame and warmth—are indeed the original form, the beautiful form which they wore in the far-off days when the coal murmured and tossed in the green forests which murmured and tossed in the sunshine.

A PRISONER OF WAR

THERE were silvery summer clouds floating in a vision of blessed peace in the blue depths; the wind in the limes and rowans was wafting an elfin summons to me to return *The World as Will and Idea* to its place on the shelf, and to come out and enjoy the world as a shining reality; the swifts were diving and wheeling to and fro with shrieks of delight that life was so good to live; a big, velvety bumble-bee was droning, with sudden stoppages and intervals of busy silence, about the white stars of the clematis and the cream roses which muffled the gable wall. I read on stoically, and might have finished Book III. but for the sound of childish merriment in the garden.

I went to the window and looked out, unobserved.

A rosy little maid of seven was playing at shuttlecock on the lawn. By the edge of a flower-bed, in the shadow of the rowans, her mother was leaning back in a garden chair. Beside the chair on a rug spread over the grass a chubby nine-months boy sat working his plump little body backwards and forwards in a ceaseless rhythm of eager, ineffectual activity.

"The planetary babe," some one had called him, seeing that the only kind of motion he had acquired was a revolution on his own axis; and looking down with fond pride at the radiant little soul, his mother, I think, was not ill-pleased.

The little girl soon tired of her solitary game. Dropping the racket on her mother's lap, she threw

herself down on the rug, and catching the planetary babe by the hands, began to sing the rhyme of "See-saw, Margery Daw."

Mother took up the racket, and looked dreamily through the square meshes of the network at the summer clouds. As she looked a happy thought struck her. The racket was a prison window, she said aloud; and gazing through the iron bars she could see the green fields and pleasant woods, with the sun shining on them.

The little girl paused in her rhyme, held the babe's hands, and listened.

Yes, she could see the swifts flying joyously up and down, and in the fields there were flowers growing; and only a hundred yards away there was a little boy and a little girl playing. How happy they must be out in the sweet air and the warm sunshine! If they only knew that she was there in a dark dungeon, with chains on her feet and hands, perhaps they would gather some flowers and give them to her.

The little girl sprang to her feet, and hurried round the garden plucking pansies and marigolds and spires of blue veronica. Returning, she put them into the babe's hands, raised him on to his unsteady feet, and lifted him up to the dolorous prison window.

"Give them to the poor man inside, baby. He is a poor old prisoner of war, and cannot get out."

Through the loophole in the dungeon wall an emaciated hand took the flowers, and a pitiful voice thanked the children for their kindness.

Then W. V., sitting down on the rug and settling the babe on her lap, looked up eagerly at the face behind the iron bars: "Say it again, mother!"

A RED-LETTER DAY

My Red-Letter Day began with a cry of a cuckoo, a glitter of dewy leaves tossing under my window, a fragrance of flowers and wood-fires, and a wild chant of jubilee. Guy Greatheart was lifting up his voice in the garden in one of his mystic songs without words.

A few minutes later I saw him under the white rosettes of the syringa. He had provided himself with a couple of pebbles, and was swinging from one foot to the other as he sang; then he walked round thrice in a ring, clashing his stone cymbals, and finally resumed his musical rocking from foot to foot. Surely some antique ancestor who worshipped the Sun with quaint dance and barbaric minstrelsy thirty centuries ago, must have at last wakened up in Guy.

And, now that I think of it, this may account for the interest and even awe with which he listens to any reference to the Laws of the Medes and Persians. When every other appeal to his sense of duty and propriety has been exhausted, when he stands stolid and breathing heavily, with eyes cast down, or sits roaring in his chair, "Wants his own way! Wants his own way!" a rhyme from that memorable code generally acts like a spell, and he gives in with a "Wipe eyes, mamma!"—whether there be tears or not.

I fear, however, that neither Winifred nor her cousin Phyllis has the same reverence for the beautiful

examples of conduct recorded in those ancient laws. The other day, after hearing that—

> The Medes and Persians did not dream
> Of doing such a thing as scream;

and

> The Medes and Persians always did
> Religiously what they were bid;

and

> The Medes and Persians thought it rude
> To play at table with their food;

Winifred rejoined—

> English children never can
> Be like Mede or Per-si-an;

and Phyllis abetted her by laughing hilariously.

Immediately after breakfast we started for a long day in the Hurtwood. Under the cool awning of his mail-cart, Guy Greatheart took charge of the string bag and basket which contained the locusts and wild honey of our wayfaring. Mother and the "chawldren," as he calls Winifred and his cousin, went briskly on before with their long hazel staffs, and I brought up the rear.

Now there are many ways of reaching the Hurtwood, but the properest is through the Two Tree Field and the Emerald Door. You turn by the mill-pool—and on this day of all days the young men were washing sheep, and a brood of fluffy ducklings were dancing among the ripples made by the heavy woolly creatures as they were tumbled into the water hurdled off for them, and martins were dipping their wings in the pool as they swept over it. Then, between the yellowing wheat and the brown hay, you push up the long slope of the Two Tree Field.

Just before you reach the first of the two trees you perceive, in a break of the high woods, the bluish bare ridge of the North Downs, and the grey silhouette of St. Martha's chapel against the sky. Along that ridge, as the children knew, thousands of travellers in the old time—travellers from the west country or from over-seas—passed on their journey to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, and rested under the shadow of St. Martha's; for that is a bit of the Pilgrims' Way.

From the second tree, the pathway mounts straight up the slope to a bright emerald door which is set in a dark green wall of oak and beech and pine at the top of the field. Some people say there is no door, that what seems so is only the path piercing the dark wall to a patch of sunlit hazels in the wood; but we have no patience with people who are always wanting to explain away things. In at the Emerald Door, and through the dim pines you go; and lo! you are on Black Heath, which, with the white sand, worn into numberless cross-tracks by sheep and rabbit and human feet, and showing through grass and gorse, through green fronds of bracken and tufts of flowering ling, might well be called White Heath.

St. Martha's was again in sight, and as we toiled slowly over the rough ground of the Heath, I told the children how, ages before Thomas à Becket was born, this same Pilgrims' Way was a famous road which wound from the coast of Kent, right along the northern edge of the mighty forest of Anderida, into Devon and Cornwall.

The ancient traders in Cornish tin used to travel that way; and sometimes they were attacked by robbers who were beaten off, and sometimes they were killed among the hills.

How could any one know that for certain? Why, because there were ingots of tin—shaped like knuckle-bones, in the Phœnician fashion—blocks of tin which the traders must have buried when the alarm was given, and which have been found beside the track.

There are huge old yew-trees, too, along the route. Some say the Druids planted these; but others say they grew naturally, and that the Druids, who could find here no great boulders for their standing-stones and circles, cut down the yews they did not want and left the rest growing in rings and avenues.

The sound of Latin once was as familiar along this way as the song of the nightingale in the May nights is still; and just as the old traders left their ingots of tin, so the old Romans left their urns and mosaic pavements to tell of their presence.

Then there are said to be fruit trees among the wildwood which fringes the old road. It was the Canterbury Pilgrims who are believed to have dropped the seeds from which these sprang, as far back, perhaps, as seven hundred years ago, when the great festival of St. Thomas was fixed for July 7.

Sweet was the fruity smell of the pines in the hot sun. A fresh breeze tempered the shadowless glare, and far away, in some pleasant tent of green, the cuckoo called with a muffled note.

Underfoot the spider had spread curious patches of iridescence. These, when you came to look, were made by his web, stretched flat on the low wiry heath; and he himself lurked stealthily in his well, in a corner of his glistening trap.

Wild roses built wonderful mounds of fairy colour on the waste. Here and there, to Winifred's horror, honeysuckle and deadly nightshade were entangled in the same clump of bushes, for deadly nightshade,

as she gravely warned me, is so venomous that it may be fatal even to touch it with a finger. Once or twice I gathered wild flowers, the names of which I wanted to know. "Why, father," she cried, laughing, "you are as fond of flowers in your hat as Plantagenet!"

Skirting the corner of Farley Heath and passing through Farley Green, we came to the shadow of a huge beech about midway to the Hurtwood; and here we rested, and refreshed ourselves on the locusts and wild honey.

There is something curiously unreal about the colouring of the trunk and branches of a big beech-tree. One could fancy that it had been whitewashed long ago, and that the rains of many seasons had only at last begun to restore some of the primeval colouring. The thick twisted roots of this beech of ours made a ladder down the steep bank into the road, and in a few moments the "chawldren" were snugly nestled in the meshes half-way up the bank. Guy was satisfied with a small cavern scooped by the rain out of a ledge of friable sandstone.

As we rested we heard the clanking of a bell, and a flock of sheep came down the road and passed.

They were driven by a very aged "Heathen," as Winifred delights (among ourselves) to call these dwellers on the Heath—an earth-coloured, shrivelled, wiry little man, who indeed looked so old that he might well have been a survivor of the ancient men of the real heathen time.

Away in the east there was a gloom of thunder, and I ventured to ask this antique shepherd whether we might expect a storm. He shook his grey head as he glanced at the sky. "No; the South-east do mostly bring blight," he said. "It's the South-west

that do give us rain, and we wants en badly." I thought of the horrible bronze demon of the South-west wind which the Chaldeans used to hang out of door or window as a talisman against the blast of the desert. If these "Heathens" were to make an image of the South-west wind, it would take the shape of a beautiful goddess breathing soft airs and showers, and they would worship her with garlands of wild flowers and little sheaves of grass and green corn.

After a stiff shove up the powdery road, for the ground rises all the way, we came at last to the high pines of the Hurtwood, and the wayside banks matted with the small green leaves and spangled with the pink little globes of the berry from which it derives its name. For, in spite of the maps, the Hurtwood is not the Hartwood, and it is not called the Hurtwood because some royal hunter, as Phyllis conjectures, was hurt there, but because "hurts" is a corruption of "whorts," and "whorts" is the short for "whortleberries."

The cuckoo shifted about the dusky coombes and steep hillocks as the youngsters took off shoes and socks, kilted their dresses, and danced among the sand and pine needles.

Then a pleasant fancy occurred to them. They tied bunches of blossoming ling to their hazel sticks, and gave Guy a rod of foxglove. This was the Pilgrims' Way, and they were Canterbury Pilgrims.

"Whortleberry Pilgrims, I think," said Winifred.

"It doesn't matter," replied Phyllis; "come along, Brother Greatheart," and Guy trod warily, with his soft feet wincing at the bits of dry wood.

"We should not go to an holy place without singing an holy song," said Winifred. "Ah, little Brother, is the way painful? It would be worse if you had

peas in your shoes. But come, you shall bathe your feet in the healing sand."

"We are such very poor pilgrims," continued Phyllis, "that we have no choice but to go barefoot." Then perceiving our preparations for lunch: "O fair and noble woman"—to her aunt—"may we beg a cup of cold water from your well, and a crust of bread from your store? Come, Brother Chatterbox and Brother Greatheart, this good queen will help us."

Brother Greatheart, however, was busy with sand and fir-cones making "a pilgrim pie" for his own delectation; and he did not feel disposed to abandon it for any week-day fare that even a queen could bestow.

"Come along, little Child of Angels," said Winifred coaxingly; but Greatheart turned a deaf ear.

"The Babe of Eden will not come, mother," Winifred reported.

"Then let us make merry ourselves," cried Phyllis, "for the way is long."

When Greatheart heard me "hopping" the ginger-beer and saw the oranges and bananas, he thought better of it and came up to our palace of oak, where fair couches of bracken and heather were spread for the pilgrim guests.

Phyllis noticed his hands. "O royal woman," she said, "give me thine outer raiment that I may wipe the sand from his hands;" then she added presently, "No matter, I have cleansed them in the bracken."

The time went quickly and gaily in all sorts of sports and nonsense.

Greatheart resumed pilgrim-pie making, or took a rest in some wayside chantry among the oak roots.

The " chawldren " played at tin-traders and ancient British marauders on a pine-covered mound.

Mother lay back against the fallen tree which was our palace, and dozed like the *Belle au bois dormant.*

I smoked and took surreptitious notes, for this was a day I should be glad to remember in every little detail of sight and sound and feeling.

At last when shoes and socks had been put on again, and Greatheart had been strapped into his mail-cart, with his rod of foxglove stuck up beside him like a flowery thyrsus, I found that the " chawldren " had wandered off into the pages of *The Heroes.* Mother was the fair Danae; I was old Chiron the Centaur, Winifred and Phyllis were Perseus and Theseus, and Guy was " the one Chiron loved best, little Achilles, the too wise child."

As we trudged merrily homeward I overheard Perseus telling Phyllis: " To-day I have slain two oxen, and watched the spotted snake change its skin." To which Theseus was somewhat at a loss for an answer, I thought, for Phyllis has not read the whole of *The Heroes* yet.

In the evening, after tea, I went out for a stroll by myself, for one never really tires of these Heaths and sandy lanes full of flowers.

I met little children, who had got back from school, playing in wild green places or driving the slow friendly cows to some fresh evening pasture. They paused or got up to smile and drop a curtsey.

Out of tangles of greenery a curl of blue smoke arose and betrayed a quaint timbered cottage which, if a hen had not run across my path, I should probably have passed unnoticed earlier in the day, so thick is the foliage.

Young lads, returning from work, went by with

a salute, and it was pleasant to observe their shy clean eyes and girlish faces. Weary as the farm labourer or woodman must have been, his spirit was light enough to let him be companionable. Sweet are the Surrey hills and the wild acres of moorland and the stretches of dingle and forest, and good and kindly are the Surrey folk.

Coming home through the dusk of the avenue of elms, I saw a mail-cart which I could pick out from a thousand, and in the still evening air I heard a brief dialogue:

"I thought it was pappa," said Guy; "and it is a gempy" (gentleman).

"It isn't a gempy," said mother, "it's pappa!"

But even this disparagement of two generations did not cast a shadow on the brightness of my Red-Letter Day.

And, after all, Guy makes up for it handsomely when he is in bed; for, after seizing my hands and squeezing them to his breast, he sits up and kisses the palms, kisses the backs, kisses my face, kisses the top of my head, and at last exhausts himself in a gush of affection: "I simply like you, pappa!"

THE FIRST PARTING

As I sit near the white and red roses in the cool green of the garden I am troubled in my mind. I try to divert thought by noting that in the last decade of July the sparrows seem to nest about half-past seven, after a good deal of chatter in the trees. Now it is eight, and there is a clear grey sky, with pearly drifts and pinkish clouds; and the martins are racing overhead, high and silent. Far beneath them come suddenly, in rushes, flights of hilarious swifts, screaming and laughing like girls let loose from school. Just for an instant as they pass I hear the whiff of their wings.

It is no use; the very swifts remind me of the child. Even the long sunny weeks among the hills and pine-woods do not seem to have been of much benefit. "Growing too fast," they say; pale and easily tired, and too excitable, I can see plainly enough; and these hot days do not agree with her, though she says she likes them.

We wait and watch; and July effects no change. August comes with the red rowan berries and cooler air, but she seems no better; and it becomes clear to us that the wisest course is to send her to the seaside till Christmas.

W. V. is, of course, delighted at the idea. The cliffs, the sands, the great waters, the magical ships sailing east and west, are anticipations of unspeakable rapture. We look for Broadstairs in the atlas; as we walk through our poor woods, from which the glamour

seems now to have exhaled, like the dew from the grass of the morning, all our talk is of the sea, and brown mariners from foreign waters, and white sails, and sand-castles, and wading, and donkey rides on the shore. I fear that as she will be at school she will not find that every day will be a holiday, but she is overjoyed at the thought of a change and new companions. "Of course" she is sorry to go away from home and to leave us, but Christmas will soon be here, and "of course" we shall go and see her at the half-term.

The day of parting comes in September, and she is radiant. The day is dull, but her little head is full of sunshine. At the London terminus her mother remarks, "What a dirty station this is!" but London is paved with gold and roofed with sapphire for her. One must admit that it is not sylvan, but the excuse comes readily: "Oh, well, mother, you couldn't expect to find green pastures and shepherds and lambs on the platform, could you?"

Poor little woman, so eager to fly away from the old woods and familiar nest, so easily caught by the glitter of change, by the mere sound of the word Sea!

At home one small mortal goes about the house wondering, missing the accustomed voices and the faces he has seen daily since the beginning of creation. He has promised to be very good till mother comes home, but he is puzzled by the silence, the vanished presences, the strange gaps left in his tiny world. He creeps under the table, and takes his wooden horse with him for companionship. Who can guess what passes between the two in that primeval rock-shelter?

When I return from town I find him breathing very heavily, almost sobbing, as he tells me, "Mingie

gone 'chool! Mamma gone 'chool." He repeats the phrase in grievous whispers to himself. At night before he falls asleep, he weeps the first tears of bereavement, and at last drops off into slumber with a bitter sigh: "Gone 'chool!"

He is more cheerful in the morning, but the mysterious sense of loss and desolation has not been washed away in sleep. He has a droll way of putting his hands together with the palms open upward, and cooing, "O-o-oh, pappa!" as if he were offering up his whole heart to you; but when I have taken him on my knee and cuddled him, he begins his tragic refrain, like a Greek chorus, "Mingie gone 'chool! Mamma gone 'chool!"

It is Saturday, so we may go into the forest together, to see some of the old friends whom he can greet with his favourite, "Hallo!" He can still say, "Ha'o, Mist' Oak! Ha'o, Lady Birch!" but alas, the birds and the flowers have all "gone 'chool."

A small boy, of friendly disposition, to whom he shouts "Ha'o, boy!" smiles at him and stops to speak, and he unfolds his trouble to his sympathetic face—"Mingie gone 'chool!"

It is just a year since Mingie and I, with Guy in his mail-cart, went through this same underwood. Here was the spot where she threw down a piece of flint—"firestone"—and was sadly disappointed that it did not burst into flames. There were the pools showing glimpses of fairyland, which she afterwards made pictures of, so that we might remember them when we grew old. It was here that in the cold days at the close of October she found a benumbed butterfly and held it till the warmth of her hand revived it, and it fluttered away. Here was the sheltered dingle, so dry and pleasant in July, where she showed

me "fairy houses," and composed me extempore poems, while Guy slept under his white awning.

The "poems," joyously free from the trammels of rhyme and metre, were after this fashion:—

"The Oak-men are always in the wood under their spreading trees, their high roof. In autumn we go and gather their cups and saucers." ("The acorns, you know, father," she adds by way of annotation.)

"All day long, if it rains, the Fairies sit under their fungus umbrellas of yellow and reddy-brown." ("I don't know why any one should call them toadstools, do you, father?") "They gather honey from the bees, and drink the rain from the grass."

"Guy looks with sunny eyes of blue at the Oak-men and the trees. The Oak-men laugh when they see Guy looking."

The reddy-brown and yellow toadstools are still there; the acorn-cups; the fairy houses, and the high roof; but alas, alas, Oak-men and Fairies and all gentle spirits of the rain-pool and the woodlands have vanished with W. V. They have all "gone 'chool."

Sometimes for whole days Guy will forget his bereavement, and then, just as we are saying, "How soon things slip out of their memories!" we hear him telling the gardener or a tradesman's boy, in mournful tones and with a hopeless shake of his head, "Mingie gone 'chool," or whispering the same reminder to himself or to his playthings.

And the radiant W. V., how does she fare on the shores of old romance? Her first letter, which

reaches us a week after her absence, is not so wildly hilarious as one would have anticipated.

(First page) My dear Mother,

I am not *very* happy hear and I do wish you wood come and take me baak with you.

(Second page) I am so *very* unhappy. Mother dear *do do* come take me baak *do do* Mother Dear I cry every night and I cannot helpit. I *am* glad to hear that *dear* Baby is well and do come and take me baak *do do* Mother I shall die if you dount

Give my love to every one

Your loveing little doughter

WINIFRED.

do come

Her mother cried over that letter, as mothers will, but Guy and I had already supped our sorrow; and though we cannot help muttering in silent rooms, we know that Christmas will soon come, and that long before Christmas, Mingie will have recovered from her home-sickness.

There is a dense fog on Christmas Day, and the gas has to be lit early in the afternoon. It is delightful to watch the small people sitting at the table decked in Christmas-tree jewelry, cracker caps and sashes of many colours—W. V. looking rosy and strong, and the boy tipsy with joy to see her again.

Mingie is playing with her enchanted people. It isn't quite Fairyland, but a borderland of spells and charms, with Brownies and Pixies and Oak-men. There is a forest of mistletoe, holly and red berries, and narcissus (in vases); and on the edge of the forest a lake, and on the lake the Queen of Pixies sails in a magic barge (a swan-shaped salt-cellar); and

a donkey (a prince bewitched) walks on the lake beside her, and there are Pixies in a wicker boat, which does not sink, "because the water runs out of it as fast as it runs in."

On this memorable day, Guy gets a new name—"Biboffski," on account of his post-prandial clamour, "Bib off! bib off!"

"Biboffski, the great Russian poet?" suggests some one.

"Oh no," says W. V. "It is Biboffski, the mighty hunter!"

"Not at all," says mother; "Biboffski is the heavenly babe—the Babe-of-Sky!"

Whereupon we all laugh, and Guy most gleefully of all.

SANTA CLAUS AND THE BABE

MINGIE'S was the first of the Christmas cards to arrive. It came early on Christmas Eve. Mademoiselle had sent it from Rouen, and she must have chosen the loveliest she could buy, for when the box was opened and the card unfolded, there, within a ring of Angels, was the Stable of Bethlehem, with the Babe in the manger, and a star gleaming over the roof.

Mingie was in an ecstasy; Phyllis, her cousin, was delighted; and even Guy Greatheart, though the little man was too young to understand, clapped his hands and cried, " Pretty, pretty! "

It was placed on the music-cabinet, so that the maidenhair fern drooped over it, and made it look like a scene in a forest among the lonely hills.

And there, after many last looks, the children left it when they went up to bed.

It had been very cold all day, and it was snowing when mother and auntie and uncle set out for the watch-night service. Father preferred a book by the warm fireside.

" Then," said mother, " you might leave the door ajar, so that you can hear the children. And won't you send a line to Tumble-Down Dick? "

Father and Tumble-Down Dick had quarrelled long ago, and it seemed no longer possible to say anything that could make any difference.

" You know that I am in the right," said father, shaking his head and frowning.

"Yes, dear, I know," said mother; "but when one is in the right, it is so much easier to be large-minded."

Father smiled grimly at the crafty reply, but said nothing.

Long afterwards, as he sat thinking, two little white figures crept down the stairs (which creaked dreadfully), and stole into the drawing-room. Then father heard the striking of a match, and going out to see what it meant, found Mingie and Phyllis.

"Oh, father," Mingie explained, "we awoke and remembered that there was no stocking hung up for the Babe; so we thought we would each hang up one of ours for him. Santa Claus is sure to see them, isn't he?"

Father laughed and carried the two back to bed.

Then he went and looked at the Stable and the Babe and the stockings.

Over the roof the Star of the East was shining, as it shone two thousand years ago. The song the Angels were singing was one of peace and good-will.

Then father wrote to Tumble-Down Dick, and hurried through the snow to catch the last post.

Tumble-Down Dick never knew what had induced father to write that letter.

THREE STEPS AND A LITTLE DOOR

I KNOW not from what dim days on the furthest verge of memory there comes floating to me an odd rhyme about some small Scotch bairn whose story has vanished with the lost legends of strath and corrie:—

> "Tommy Gorrie—
> Went—up—three—steps;
> And in at a little doorie."

Even at this distance of time it seems to me that I can bring back the feeling of delight and wonderment and curiosity which those words awakened in my childish soul. They were a sort of spell; for when I repeated them to myself, there, in front of me, set in a long high wall of grey stone, was the little door with its pointed arch—a door of solid oak almost bleached by the weather from brown to grey; and there were the three stone steps leading to it.

The other evening I overheard Carrie telling Boy-Beloved the rhyme, and now Winifred goes up and down the house repeating it.

Of Tommy Gorrie I was often told—just as Carrie now tells Boy-Beloved—that *he* never did any of the discreditable and unruly things of which I appear to have been guilty. Tommy Gorrie never said "No;" he never screamed or stamped in great wrath; he liked everything that was good for him; he did not need to be told twice.

I am in doubt as to how Boy-Beloved regards the exemplary Tommy. "You mustn't crumble your

biscuit on the cloth," said Carrie. "Mustn't I crumble my biscuit?" asked Boy-Beloved; "didn't Tommy Gorrie crumble his biscuit?" "No, he didn't." "Didn't he? Naughty boys do!" For my part, I was not emulous of Tommy Gorrie; I should have taken *no* interest in him if it had not been that he went up those three steps and in at that little door. But that was an adventure which might well excite the envy and admiration of the most revolutionary little Radical.

What did Tommy Gorrie see when he went in?

No one could tell me. I used to stare for ten minutes together at the door I could picture before me, and wish it would open—were it but a hand's breadth—so that I might have just one glint of the wonderland on the other side of the wall; but it only ended in some one coming to see what new scheme of mischief was keeping me so quiet.

At night I would dream that I was going up the steps, and that the door was yielding to the push of my strong hand; but either I awoke before it opened, or the dream took another turn, and I found myself as far as ever from solving the mystery.

Those three steps and that little door were the imperishable romance of my childhood. Had my curiosity been gratified I should have forgotten all about them; but as no one could tell me, and as I never found the door while awake and could never enter by it while asleep, I had for years an inexhaustible subject for my day-dreams.

Since I have grown up I have had several curious reminders of that old rhyme. It was with a singular shock of reminiscence that I read Goethe's sketch in his Autobiography, of the enchanted garden which he entered by the little brown wicket in the Bad Wall;

and of his complete failure to find the entrance a second time, although he had noted the extremely old nut-trees, whose green branches hung down over the wall on the opposite side of the way, and the niche with the fountain.

And almost as much like a page from my own experience was the passage in Mr. Pater's idyll, "The Child in the House," in which he tells of such a vision of loveliness as Tommy Gorrie must have had when he went up the three steps.

For "it happened that, as he walked one evening, a garden gate, usually closed, stood open; and lo! within, a great red hawthorn in full flower, embossing heavily the bleached and twisted trunk and branches, so aged that there were but few green leaves thereon —a plumage of tender crimson fire out of the heart of the dry wood. The perfume of the tree had now and again reached him, in the currents of the wind, over the wall, and he had wondered what might be behind it."

But beautiful as that sight must have been, and sweet as were that child's dreams, loitering all night "along a magic roadway of crimson flowers," my three steps and the little doorie gave promise of a surprise more strange, and of a more rapturous joy.

Only once have I seen in print anything that came near to the glad mystery hidden behind my leagues of lofty stone wall. Any one who is curious will find it in Carlyle's translation of Tieck's little masterpiece, "The Elves."

When Tommy Gorrie went up three steps and in at a little doorie, he must have been as fortunate as little Mary when she ran across the bridge. He must have met a glittering elf-maiden, and swung

with her on the tops of the trees which she made spring up with a stamp of her fairy foot, and seen the dwarfs carrying sacks of gold-dust, and watched the water-children swimming and sporting and blowing on crooked shells. Only I do not believe that *his* story ended with the sorrowful disenchantment of Mary's. The magic garden into which Tommy Gorrie's door opened never lost a green leaf or a coloured blossom, and no wicked weather of the world ever reached it, and Tommy——

Well, as for Tommy, I don't believe he never said "No," and liked everything that was good for him, and did not need to be told twice. I think he was no better and no worse than Boy-Beloved, or even than myself. I think Tommy is alive yet, and never grows any older. I think he spends his time in seeking for those three steps and going in at that little door.

What happens then I don't know; but I fancy he gets tired with play and falls asleep; and when he awakes he finds himself outside, with just a dim, dreamy recollection of something strange and delightful, and so he sets off again to find the three steps. And as long as there are children Tommy Gorrie will be a child, and will continue to go up three steps and in at a little doorie.

There is a curious tenacity and suggestiveness about rhymes, and this of Tommy Gorrie hitches itself on to all sorts of people and incidents. When I read a page of a beautiful book, I nod across to the invisible author: "You went up three steps and in at a little doorie." When I meet a couple of lovers in the wood, I smile to myself: "You are looking for three steps, eh?" When I pass a Sister of Charity, or watch a working woman rocking a babe

in her arms, I think: "And you too have been up the three steps."

To-night even, as I sat with my small son on one knee and his sister on the other, and my wife asked, "Which way did you come home?" I replied, somewhat absently it might seem, "Up three steps and in at a little doorie;" but her laugh showed that she understood.

OUR POEMS

INSIGNIFICANT as they may be in themselves, the verses which follow are to me so full of sad and of happy memories, that I cannot forbear giving them a place in these pages. As I read them once more the leaves of vanished summers are green on the trees, the snow of a winter forgotten drifts against the window; the day, the spot, the bright young faces are all brought back, with the light of love and gladness upon them. And nothing of the least of these would I willingly lose.

OUR POEMS

THE RING-FENCE

Oh, happy garden trees,
By dim degrees
Your subtle branches, muffling me about,
Shut all my neighbours out!

Not that I love them less, but they
Being fenced away,
'Tis sweet to feel in oh! how small a round
May peace and joy abound.

HOME

East or West, at home is best!
Let the norland blizzard blow
From the icy mountain crest,
While I wade through drifts of snow,

Smoke I'd see—blue smoke alone—
From my own chimney gladlier than
Cheeriest fire on the hearthstone
Of another and better man.

THE MIRACULOUS

I left her in the dark to find
Her own way home; she had no fear.
I followed noiselessly behind;
She never dreamed that I was near.

I let her have her childish will;
  But had she cried, why in a wink!—
That would have seemed a miracle.
  So in our little life, I think.

BEDTIME

She kneels and folds her baby hands,
  And gaily babbling lisps her prayer.
What if she laughs? God understands
  The joyous heart that knows no care.

Her prayer is like a new-fledged bird
  That cannot flutter to its tree;
But God will lift it, having heard,
  Up to the nest where it would be.

CAROL

When the herds were watching
  In the midnight chill,
Came a spotless lambkin
  From the heavenly hill.

Snow was on the mountains,
  And the wind was cold,
When from God's own garden
  Dropped a rose of gold.

When 'twas bitter winter,
  Houseless and forlorn
In a star-lit stable
  Christ the Babe was born.

Welcome, heavenly lambkin;
Welcome, golden rose;
Alleluia, Baby
In the swaddling clothes!

SANTA CLAUS

Wee Flaxen-poll and Golden-head,
They both are sleeping, rosy-red;
And loving hands that make no noise
Have filled each stocking full of toys.

Oh, think!—unslumbering and forlorn,
Perchance one little Babe new-born
Lies wondering that we never saw
Him too, in spirit, in the straw.

IN THE STORM

Thro' half the wild March night the sleet
Against the shuddering windows beat.
" Pity," a small voice prayed, " dear God,
Our blackbird in the ivy-tod! "

The blackbird, darkling in her nest,
Felt five green eggs beneath her breast,
And knew no cold: through all the storm
Five coals of mothering kept her warm.

ALMOND BLOSSOM

Among the snow-flakes, whirling white,
I saw a vision of delight—
All clotted by the wintry shower,
An almond-tree laughed out in flower!

Blow, wintry years, I shall not care,
If I the almond's joy may share,
And break in bloom at heart, although
My aged head be white with snow!

MY FRIEND [1]

I saw a little raindrop
Upon a grassy blade;
I touched it not, but in my heart
A home for it I made.

For mirrored in the raindrop
I saw the skies descend;
And Heaven was there. So in my heart
It came to be my friend.

GARDEN-FIRES

What though the snow gleams on the hill!
The sweet west wind blows fresh and clear;
The world feels new.
Tree-tops are full of heavenly blue;
The hollyhock and daffodil
Are shooting leaf and spear;
The rosebush starts from sleep.
And, redding plots and walks,
The gardener rakes into a fiery heap
The dead year's withered leaves and shrivelled stalks.

Blow, wind of heaven, and make me whole!
Oh, blue of heaven, fill full my soul!
And, while the new-born flower springs,
I too will burn all dead and worthless things.

[1] See p. 157.

APRIL SONG—I.

Little Boy Blue, come blow, come blow
Through wood and field your magic horn!
The almond blossom is chilled with snow,
The green bud seared on hazel and thorn.

We want to see the spring clouds go
Like lambs through sunny fields of morn;
So wake, you Little Boy Blue, and blow
Through wood and field your April horn!

APRIL SONG—II.

How glad I shall be
When summer comes round—
The leaf on the tree,
The flower on the ground;

A welkin of glass,
A wind from the west,
A nest in the grass,
And eggs in the nest;

Lambs leaping for joy,
My boy in his pram,
My big baby boy,
Half wild for a lamb!

The snow's on the ground,
No leaf's on the tree;
When summer comes round
How glad shall I be!

IN THE WOODLANDS

In the forest lawns I see
  Little ring-plots fenced around,
So that shrub and sapling tree
  Thrive in safe and happy ground;

And I wonder, Cannot I
  Keep some little place apart,
Open to the wind and sky,
  For the growing of my heart?

MARTIN-TIDE

When morning rain has washed with sheen
  Each blade and flower, and made them sweet,
And twinkling trees stand wet and green,
  And rain-pools sparkle in the street,
Oh, then beside some lakelet filled
  With quivering shapes of mirrored leaves,
The martin gathers mud to build
  His hanging nest beneath the eaves.

Then, in a little, you shall hear,
  Awaking at the break of light,
Low twitterings, very soft and clear,
  For joy of five pure eggs of white;
And so take heart for the new day
  That oh, such little things suffice—
Eggs, raindrops, particles of clay—
  To make a bower of paradise.

MAY-MORNING RAIN

Oh sweet, oh sweet, oh sweet the Spring,
When angels make the world anew,
And gladness gleams from everything
Between the living green and blue;

And airs that breathed in Paradise
Blow draughts of life through shower and shine,
And the five gifts of sense suffice
To make mere consciousness divine!

Oh, fresh on leaf and blossom-flake
The rain of early morning glints;
It lies about in little lakes,
It fills the ruts and horseshoe prints;

With leaf and bloom its depths are lit—
How magically deep they seem!
A flock goes by: far down in it
Glide sheep and lambs as in a dream.

A sparrow comes, and bathes and drinks;
Wildly he flounces in his joy,
Breaks the clear glass, and little thinks
What fairy scenes his freaks destroy.

Yet who'd begrudge him? Off he flies!
And once again, most beautiful,
Leaf, blossom, clouds, and sunny skies
Are pictured in the little pool;

And, wandering in some fairy deep
Where grass is sweet and sweet the air,
As Winnie knows, the herd and sheep
And bleating lambs are also there.

FELLOW-FEELING

Poor little soul! We kissed the place
To make the smarting forehead whole,
Then dried the May and April face,
Saying, Poor little soul!

So soothed, he felt within him stir
Some pity for his mate in woe,
And went and kissed the baluster,
Sighing, Poor itty so'!

IN THE UNDERWOOD

"I fought you was quite gone away!"
He said, with blue eyes big with tears;
Then hugged and kissed my hands. I'll play
No more upon his childish fears.

For, as he frolicked through the wood,
I watched from leafy hiding-place,
And saw how, missing me, he stood
With startled eyes and twitching face.

And thought how soon the day will come,
When shadowed by the cypress-tree
I shall be very cold and dumb,
And he bereft of power to see.

And I, too stark to breathe or move,
Shall watch his piteous dismay,
And hear his sob of frightened love—
"Pappa!" grow faint and die away.

FROM FLOWER TO FLOWER

When morning comes with golden air,
Before the garden shadows wane,
Her tenderness delights to bear
From flower to flower the gift of rain.

And God, who gives in gracious wise,
Her own sweet gift on her bestows;
Joy flowers, like speedwells, in her eyes,
And in her heart love, like a rose.

THE ANGLER

On pool and pinewood, clearly grey,
The twilight deepened, hushed and cool;
The trout swam high in languid play;
Ring-ripples stirred the darkening pool.

And as I watched in pleased content,
Dim memories of bygone things
Rose softly, and through my spirit sent
A glimmering joy in trembling rings.

THE WATER-OUSEL

Beneath the brook, with folded wings
The Ousel walks; and one may hear,
In happy hour, the song he sings,
Submerged, yet elfin-sweet and clear.

Dear child, I see in those fresh eyes
Far down, drawn deep from troublous things,
Your spirit walking, ousel-wise,
In dreamy song with folded wings.

RED-CAP CHERRIES

RED-CAP Cherries, hanging high
In the azure and the sun,
Cuckoo now has ceased his cry—
Now his summer song is done.

He with cherries plumped his crop
Three times—so he calls no more,
We'll be dumb too, if you'll drop,
Filling thrice our pinafore.

A CHILD'S SONG[1]

THE little white clouds are playing to-day,
Playing to-day, playing to-day;
They call to the flowers, Come out and play,
Come out and play!

Come out and play, for the sun is rolled,
Sun is rolled, sun is rolled,
Thro' meadows of blue, like a ball of gold,
A ball of gold.

The flowers reply, We see you on high,
See you on high, see you on high,
We flutter our leaves, and long to fly,
And long to fly.

We dance in the breeze, pirouette and sway,
'ouette and sway, 'ouette and sway,
Pretending we're clouds, and with you at play,
With you at play!

[1] The first stanza and the "ball of gold" in the second are Winifred's.

TO WINIFRED

When I am dead,
And you are old,
You'll sit as we are sitting now,
Close to the fire, hearing the wind blow cold;
And you will stroke a golden head,
And, suddenly, remembering how
I fondled yours, become at last aware
How dear to me was every single hair.

When I am dead,
And you are old,
You'll clasp in yours a little hand—
A nestling hand, sweet as a flower to hold—
The pretty fingers you will spread,
And kissing them will understand
How kissing yours, I found therein a joy
Beyond the world's to give, or to destroy.

THE LOOK

Beside the fire he sits between my feet,
And, snuggling, feels how winter can be sweet.
Then leaning back—such love in his clear eyes!—
"You look at me a little bit!" he cries.
"I *have* been looking, dear!" "You look again!"

O least importunate of tiny men,
Have eyes such power? Can such a trifling thing
So lift up your fond heart upon the wing?
Yet I that know Whose eyes upon me brood
Have never felt this child's beatitude.

THE CALL

I WALKED with one whose child had lately died.
We passed the little folk i' the street at play,
When suddenly a clear voice " Father! " cried;
The man turned quick and glad; sighed; moved away.

I spoke not, but 'twas given me to discern
The love that watches through th' eternal years;
God surely so must start and quickly turn
Whene'er the cry of " Father! " strikes His ears.

THE MANTELPIECE

THE polished oaken lintel showed
Dusk forest, and a winding road.
The grain o' the oak-heart only? Nay,
We trod that road but yesterday.
Through hushed and haunted trees it wound,
To wishing-wells and faerie-ground.

The elfin horns blew crystal-clear!
No more we two those horns shall hear.
Her sprightly feet are lapped in clay—
Joy's very feet! O Yesterday!
Beloved playmate, are you dead?
Winifred! Winifred!

THE WELLS OF ELIM

ELIM, Elim! Through the sand and heat
I toil with heart uplifted, I toil with bleeding feet,
For Elim, Elim! at the last, I know
That I shall see the palm-trees, and hear the waters flow.

Elim, Elim! Grows not here a tree,
And all the springs are Marah, and bitter thirst to me;
But Elim, Elim! in thy shady glen
Are twelve sweet wells of water, and palms threescore and ten.

Elim, Elim! though the way be long,
Unmurmuring I shall journey, and lift my heart in song;
And Elim, Elim! all my song shall tell
Of rest beneath the palm-tree, and joy beside the well.

GLOAMING

The green sky!
The far hills!
My heart fills;
I sigh—sigh!

Spirits blest
Surely lie
In green sky
In God's rest.

My heart fills;
I sigh—sigh.
The green sky!
The far hills!

SUB UMBRA CRUCIS

SUB UMBRA CRUCIS

HERE by the green mound where she lies, the cry of Pliny rises in my heart, "Give me some fresh comfort, great and strong, such as I have never yet heard or read. Everything that I have read or heard comes back now to my memory, but my sorrow is too deep to be reached by it."

But oh, mothers on whose wet pillows sit the little shadows of lost babes, how shall I have better comfort than you, for whom no one has found oblivion in Lethe, or balm in Gilead? I know, and I understand, with what sweet and sorrowful dreams you have sought to dull the edge of anguish; why you hung tiny moccasins above the little grave; how you filled the cradle with feathers and decked it with toys, and carried it on your back, so that the wearied baby-spirit might find warmth and rest when it would. I know, and I understand, how, looking at the sunrise of the new day, you made its glittering fields the land of the bright little creatures of whom you had been bereaved.

These of old were your dreams waking and sleeping; and these you gave for solace to those who grieved with you, and to all who in days to come should have an empty chair in the house, and toys with which no one should care to play any more. And we too, of a later time, seek for relief in the same fond way, and try to quench our thirst from the well of dreams. But it is only in our own dreams

that our pain is assuaged, not in the dreams of any other.

Oh, friend, let me thank you for your tender words. Again and again I have read them:—" It is a lovely face, and the soul in the face is more beautiful than the face itself. Strange, how extraordinarily near I feel to that girl. Her death affected me more than any death outside my own household. To see her face in that photograph made me feel it still more. To lose her was a tragedy. But as I looked at her I felt also that her happiness was now supreme, and her love for all she loved tenfold. Yet—would she had stayed. She looks immortal in her picture, and I suppose she was sorely needed where she lives now."

Do not blame me if I am not made happy by your words; nor by yours, dear woman, who write to me from your lonely mission-house in the far East:—" Perhaps, too, as the disciples were tired and cross, and there was no other way but that one of calling unto them a little child, so perchance Jesus called your little one to teach the angels something they, too, would not understand; and, perhaps, no other little child would do."

Dreams, dreams, and not *my* dreams—dreams that might give rest if one knew that they were only a little more than dreams.

Surely sorrow is fractious and hard to please, for I must quarrel with you, old friend, who bid me be glad of heart, for now she is " removed from the evil to come," now she is " safe." Is that a worthy, and not a shallow comfort? Do you not see beneath it the selfishness and the cowardice that are glad to be set free from future responsibility? Why should we so disparage the dead, and discount God's purposes? Do you forget the poet's lines—

If he had lived, you say—
Well, well—if he had lived, what then?
Some men
Will always argue—yes, I know . . . of course . . .
The argument has force.
If he had lived, he might have changed—
From bad to worse?
Nay, my shrewd balance-setter,
Why not from good to better?
Why not to best? to joy
And splendour? O, my boy!

And you who chide me gently, and bid me be a man and bear as a man, considering—oh, Job's comforter!—how, at the heart of it, sorrow is rooted in self, and when we mourn it is less for the lost than for the losers, shall I not also feel as a man? How shall I not "remember such things were, that were most precious to me"?

For whom should I lament? Not for her—oh, not for her, for she is in Thy keeping, O Thou Light of the Dead. For whom should I lament, if not for the living who are left? Did we so lightly value Thy gift to us that when it was withdrawn we dried eyes scarcely wet, and straightway forgot that she had ever been flesh of our flesh and soul of our soul?

Oh, friend, whose hand hurts and does not heal, ape not a vain and foolish stoicism. God is not vexed by the tears whose fountains He has made. And if He who could raise from the dead was moved to tears beside the sepulchre at Bethany, who shall rebuke us that we weep rather for ourselves than for those who have been taken from us?

And you who, meaning well, but speaking not so well, write to me wondering why one who died so young should have lived at all oh, do not ask for

reasons. These things are God's mysteries. As she herself used to say, "Our sense is nothing to God's; and though big people have more sense than children, the sense of all the big people in the world put together would be no sense to His. We are only little babies to Him; we do not understand Him at all."

Is it not enough to know that to be born is to enter into the birthright of a blessed immortality?

Oh, Thou whose shadow is death, whose shadow is immortality, "we do not understand Thee at all." But we know that Thou art good and wise and pitiful; and we believe that when Thou takest childhood in its blossom, and seemest to forget old age in weariness and penury, Thou hast Thy purpose for that with Thee, as Thou hast for this which awaits Thee.

And if we weep the loss of our little child, it is not that we would call her back, but that it is a need of our nature to regret the beloved made invisible. Nay, if Thou shouldst promise, Call her and she shall return, we should be dumb with the dread of an unknown future, we should *not* call, we should leave her to Thy divine fatherhood.

And if in the dust and darkness of our souls we reach out our hands to her, it is but to know that she is happy, that it *is* well with her, that she is indeed with Thee.

And if we ask for a sign, it is but the longing of creatures who live and feel and know by the senses, to have through the senses an assurance of that which we believe in the spirit. Thou knowest our frame; remember that we are dust. Is it strange that we, too, should cry, *Lama sabachthani?*

And you, true friend and wise consoler, who bid me think of that little Agatha, "aged fourteen

years," who sleeps in the catacombs at Rome under that simple avowal of grateful hearts,

" For whom thanks be to the Lord and to Christ,"

perhaps you perceived more clearly than I myself how much I had to be thankful for in this child.

When I ponder on all that I owe her, I seem to apprehend a strange and heavenly truth underlying one of the most savage superstitions of the Dark Ages. For you have not forgotten how when the walls of Copenhagen, as the legend tells, crumbled and fell as fast as they were built, an innocent little girl was set in her chair beside a table, where she played with her toys and ate the rosy apples they gave her while twelve master-masons closed a vault over her; and then the walls were raised, and stood firm for ever after. And so it may sometimes be in the dispensations of providence that the lives of men can only be raised high and stable in virtue of the little child immured for ever within them.

Poor little shadow, with its apples and playthings! Poor little child, if still the walls crumble and fall!

They have finished the white cross upon her grave; they have set the marble curbs about her little plot of earth, and covered it with flowers.

The first sight of it shocked me in a manner that I could not have anticipated. I had learned to find a sort of comfort in the broken turf, the grassy clods, the new leaves of weeds springing between the clods and stones, the bees droning from flower to flower. These were in the rough but kindly way of nature. And the earth lay light—light and warm

and living in the sunshine. It is a foolish thing to say: to the green mound I had grown reconciled.

But now this heavy slab seemed the last seal set on the irretrievable. It was the visible, immovable symbol of that unseen door, which we *knew* was closed, but which, to our own hearts, we made-believe was not so surely closed but that it might miraculously fall open to our prayers. Oh, how many have known that unaccountable feeling of unreasoning expectation—to how many does it cling for months, for years—that, somehow, something is going to happen which will bring their dead children back to them again!

Heavily lay that slab upon me, until there dawned within me the memory of another grave, whither an angel "came, and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it."

How strange that *that* should ever have been written; for of the four who told the story of the tomb in the garden, three have been silent as to that heavenly vision; and a merciful thing it seemed—predestined, one almost dared to think, for such a time of trouble—that to one of the Evangelists it was given to use words which have power to change the stone of the last despair into a seat for an angel.

Deep in her garden I have buried a wisp of warm brown hair twined with a faded flower plucked in some New South Wales field and sent by a stranger who loved her.

Between the dark green ledges of the cedar which grows beyond her grave I see far below me the dome of St. Paul's, dream-like in the smoke and autumn haze; and the dim masses of the great city. How her eyes brightened with interest when she looked

on that romantic region of Dick Whittington's adventures.

On one of the steps of the cross is her name, with the date of birth and of death.

Not there, but in my heart, is written—

"For whom thanks be to the Lord and to Christ."

W. V.

Here's a flower for you, lying dead,
  Child, whom living I never met.
  Friends a many I may forget—
Not you, little Winifred.

Men grow sick when they live alone,
  And long for the sound of a childish voice.
  And you—how often you've made me rejoice
In a simple faith like your own!

So here's a flower for you, Winifred—
  Out of London, a violet—
  Little child whom I never met,
Winifred, lying dead.

H. D. Lowry.

The Morning Post, April 18, 1901.

ENVOY

ENVOY

"Crying Abba, Father"

ABBA, in Thine eternal years
Bethink Thee of our fleeting day;
We are but clay;
Bear with our foolish joys, our foolish tears,
And all the wilfulness with which we pray!

I have a little maid who, when she leaves
Her father and her father's threshold, grieves,
But being gone, and life all holiday,
Forgets my love and me straightway;
Yet, when I write,
Kisses my letters, dancing with delight,
Cries " Dearest father! " and in all her glee
For one brief live-long hour remembers me.
Shall I in anger punish or reprove?
Nay, this is natural; she cannot guess
How one forgotten feels forgetfulness;
And I am glad thinking of her glad face,
And send her little tokens of my love.

And Thou—wouldst Thou be wroth in such a case?

And crying Abba, I am fain
To think no human father's heart
Can be so tender as Thou art,
So quick to feel our love, to feel our pain.

When she is froward, querulous or wild,
Thou knowest, Abba, how in each offence
I stint not patience lest I wrong the child
Mistaking for revolt defect of sense,
For wilfulness mere spriteliness of mind;
Thou know'st how often, seeing, I am blind;
How when I turn her face against the wall
And leave her in disgrace,
And will not look at her or speak at all,
I long to speak and long to see her face;
And how, when twice, for something grievous done,
I could but strike, and though I lightly smote,
I felt my heart rise strangling in my throat;
And when she wept I kissed the poor red hands.

All these things, Father, a father understands;
And am not I Thy son?

Abba, in Thine eternal years
Bethink Thee of our fleeting day;
From all the rapture of our eyes and ears
How shall we tear ourselves away?
At night my little one says nay,
With prayers implores, entreats with tears
For ten more flying minutes' play;
How shall we tear ourselves away?
Yet call, and I'll surrender
The flower of soul and sense,
Life's passion and its splendour,
In quick obedience.

If not without the blameless human tears
By eyes which slowly glaze and darken shed,
Yet without questionings or fears

For those I leave behind when I am dead.
Thou, Abba, know'st how dear
My little child's poor playthings are to her;
What love and joy
She has in every darling doll and precious toy;
Yet when she stands between my knees
To kiss good-night, she does not sob in sorrow,
"Oh, father, do not break or injure these!"
She knows that I shall fondly lay them by
For happiness to-morrow;
So leaves them trustfully.
And shall not I?

Whatever darkness gather
O'er coverlet or pall,
Since Thou art Abba, Father,
Why should I fear at all?

Thou'st seen how closely, Abba, when at rest,
My child's head nestles to my breast;
And how my arm her little form enfolds
Lest in the darkness she should feel alone;
And how she holds
My hands, my two hands in her own?

A little easeful sighing
And restful turning round,
And I too, on Thy love relying,
Shall slumber sound.

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EVERYMAN
I WILL GO WITH
THEE
& BE THY GVIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE